

COMPUTER GAMER

JUNE 1987
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ENDURO RACING

RINGS II—
SHADOWS OF MORDOR

NEMESIS—
KONAMI HIT THE TOP

ACTIVISION AWAKES

CYBORG SURFACES



BOUNDERS LOOK OUT!
IT'S STIFFLIP AND CO

PLUS KIRK'S HINTS AND MAPS
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You are invited to join the Murder Club, but be careful you could end up. **KILLED**

UNTIL DEAD

"YES, IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT... A PERFECT NIGHT FOR MURDER!"

"I Hercule Holmes, had gotten used to nights like this. As the world's greatest detective and resident house dick of the infamous Gargoyle Hotel, I've made a living looking for the subtle signs of impending foul play. Gloomy weather, blood curdling screams, gunshots, empty bottles of poison, bodies tumbling down stairs, a mutilated corpse or even an axe-wielding maniac might slip right by the untrained private eye. But to a master sleuth like myself, these telltale signs can only mean one thing. The Murder Club has just checked in!"



"The Murder Club? Yes, the Murder Club! Five of the world's bestselling murder mystery writers who transpose their fictional pulp plots into real-life murder and mayhem. Once again they have convened for their annual reunion here at the Gargoyle Hotel. And once again the dark, damp halls will echo with the cries of 'Don't shoot!', 'I've been poisoned!', 'Who stabbed me?', 'I've been shortshotted!', and 'Who took all the hot water?' Yes, with the Murder Club as tonight's guests, more than the plumbing will be amiss!"

"Each member of The Murder Club will try to bump off the others and lay down claim to the crown of 'World's Greatest Murderer'. But it will not be a piece of quiche! For these brilliant criminal minds must match wits with moi, Hercule Holmes! I have only

until midnight to discover the would-be murderer, victim, murder weapon and the scene of the crime."

"At my disposal will be every imaginable piece of high tech crimestopping gadgetry known to sleuthdom: minicameras, hidden bugs, even wire taps. Yet all these modern electronic wonders cannot replace my inherent ability as a born detective... instincts passed from generation to generation in the Holmes family.

Therefore, I accept the challenge. I will uphold the family honour! Before this night is over I will prevent a murder or be murdered trying! If I fail, one of the illustrious members of the Murder Club will surely be killed... yes Killed Until Dead!"

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SPECTRUM 48K
tape £8.99

AMSTRAD
tape £9.99
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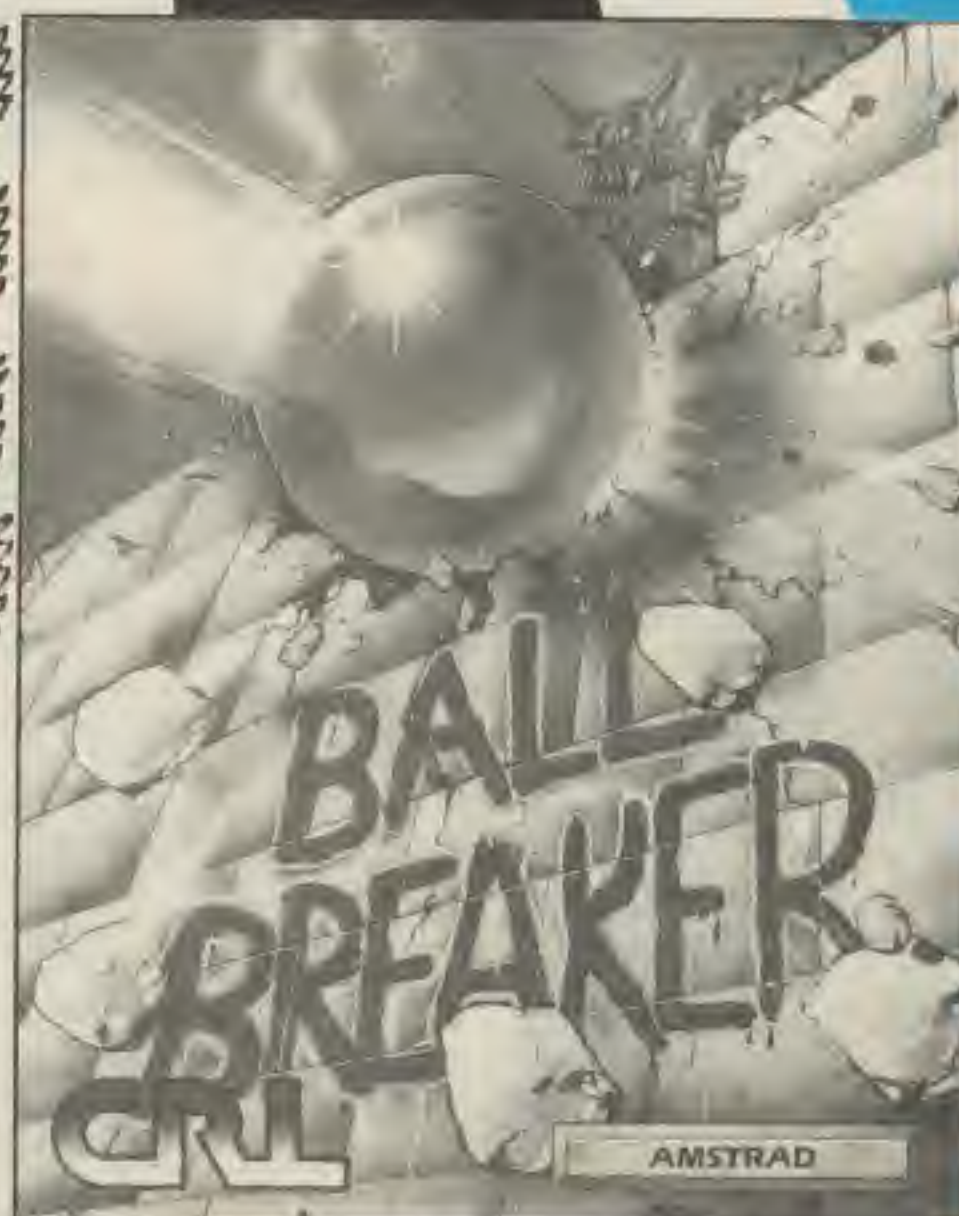
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Yogi Bear

Piranha's Pickernik

Piranha has proved it's smarter than the average software house by snapping up the rights to *Yogi Bear* — and it is far from kid's stuff. This new game promises furious fun chases as the lovable bear tries to rescue his little sidekick, Boo Boo.

Nasty bearnappers have made off with Yogi's little friend and hidden themselves somewhere in Jellystone Park. Distraught, Yogi is determined to free his buddy but the lure of an unguarded picnic basket can easily sidetrack him. His life is also made un-bear-able by the park ranger who joins the throng of irate day trippers in this hot pursuit game.

At the moment all Piranha has to show for its efforts is a scrolling landscape showing Yogi in super cartoon-like animated action but I am assured that all the other characters will be equally true to the Hannah-Barbara originals.

Other future releases from Piranha include a game featuring the 2000 AD character Judge Death, one of the Dark Judges. As Judge Anderson you must banish Death and his cohorts back to Deathworld and beat them on their own ground in the final stage of the game.

Also planned is *Beast Enders*, a soap opera spoof from Fergus MacNeil; a maritime shoot-em-up called *Gunboat*; the a-maze-ing *SID*; *Flunky*, which is an everyday tale of royal folk; *Trapdoor II*, from Don Priestley, plus *Roy of the Rovers*, a football game with a difference.

Contact: Piranha Software, 4 Little Essex Street, London WC2R 3LF. (Tel: 01-836 6633).

Owners of the C16 and Plus/4 who may be feeling a bit left out recently can take heart — *Summer Events* is on its way to you!

From the programmer of *Winter Events*, Udo Gertz, the new game is claimed to be even better. Software house Anco is claiming that the graphics and animation are better than anything on the C64! We'll let our reviewers be the judge of that when they get their hot sticky hands on it.

Why are their hands hot and sticky? You may well ask — but if you'd been pole vaulting, swimming, kayaking, high board diving, cycling and creeple chasing all in a short space of time, you'd be hot and sticky too.

Summer Events is due for release at the end of April (just too late for us to get a review into this issue) and will cost £9.95.

Contact: Anco Software Ltd, 35 West Hill, Dartford, Kent. DA1 2EL. Tel: (0322) 92513/8.

Nexus Nebula

As Nexus starts to build up steam, the game action heats up with two new titles.

Hades Nebula is a shoot-em-up in Terra Cresta mould with graphics that would make Andrew Braybrook proud. As you shoot your way across scrolling shipscapes you have to fight off the alien attack waves and blast open storage pods to gain extras for your fighter craft.

The second game is *Micronaut One* from Tail Geti programmer, Pete Cooke. Wandering through a scrolling 3D maze complex, *Micronaut* must act like a hi-tech stoker, collecting energy and feeding up the computers which control the complex.

Surprise! Surprise! Invaders have penetrated the complex in the form of metamorphic aliens. Starting life as an egg, they hatch into gigantic maggot-like grubs, which, in turn, form umbrella-shaped imagos and end their lives at a web which spawns more eggs. *Micronaut's* secondary task is to destroy these aliens and free the base.

Pete is so pleased with his new creation that he has included a race game which shows the speed of the graphics generation to its best effect, allowing you to hurtle down the endless corridors at breakneck speed in pursuit of a droid.

Contact: Nexus Productions, DSB House, 30 High Street, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1AY. (Tel: 01-658 5723).

Hades Nebula



At last, my faith has been restored in arcade conversions. Lately the quality has been waning but Enduro Racer and Nemesis have restored my faith in the capabilities of the humble eight-bit computer.

Mark Eyles of Activision/Electric Dreams brought a copy of the game to Gamer's office a couple of months ago and I was so impressed that I chose the most unlikely reviewer to assess the game.

The reviewer, Rory Newman, is a Commodore man through and through. I've heard his tirades about his brother's 'inferior' Spectrum for several months now and that was the reason why Rory ended up with a Spectrum game to review. Rory specialises in Commodore racing games and is a hard man to please. Anything less than excellence would have received short shrift but my gamble paid off as his review in this issue shows.

Selection of reviewers is one of the most difficult choices facing an editor. Lots of magazines take the easy way out and work on the Jack-of-all-trades, master-of-none basis, but not so at Gamer! If I were a specialist in football strategy games I would not expect a maze game reviewer to do justice to a text-only game. 'Wot no graphics' would be the typical response. These are games for a specialist market and require a specialist reviewer who knows what the people want. A strategy game given a rave review from a shoot-em-up fanatic is unlikely to appeal to pure strategists who like to exercise their brains rather than exerting their thumbs. Horses for courses is what I believe in (though my efforts at picking a Grand National winner proves you can't always be right!)

Darts and snooker, like shoot-em-ups and beat-em-ups, are immensely popular, anyone can play no matter how much they lack the skill of the professional. Chess and billiards, like adventures and wargames, are taken far more seriously. I remember well one radio interviewer who came to the Gamer offices and wanted to record the atmosphere of wargame fanatics in full cry. The result was a disappointing silence broken by the occasional sound of a keyboard being tapped rather than the cries of 'Nuke the Commie bastions' which she was expecting.

SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS

With decreasing software sales and the rise of budget labels it's becoming increasingly more difficult for the independents to stay afloat, yet companies like Bubble Bus and Hewson are being joined by new houses. Nexus and Francis Lee's Starlight are battling their way through to the top as Melbourne House, PSS, Mikro-Gen and Thalamus seek the shelter of larger companies, while Macten and American Action disappear without trace.

In the hardware business, life can be tough too. Just when Chris Kayday starts to make his mark at the head of Commodore UK with the forthcoming launch of the cheaper Amiga, tempting those of modest income, while simultaneously the A2000 is set to excite the business world, the news comes that he is to sever his ties with the American giant. Having captained CBM through their trials and tribulations of the past few years the winds of change blow him away. It's a fickle world.

THE OLE GRAIL

It's well known that the present financial climate has led to the rise of the Korean electronics industry where cheaper labour helps to keep down the production costs for hardware. Now the software industry appears to be exploiting the talents of overseas sources. Several months ago I saw a Spanish game which Melbourne House were considering for release and recently Imagine has announced a lucrative deal with our EEC partners. Mike Mahoney's Alligata is snapping up games like their forthcoming release Livingstone, I Presume. The scene is changing, with fewer American and British games dominating the scene as more and more Japanese, French, Scandinavian and German products start to flow in.

Can we expect games with titles like Guerre Sans Frontiere, Terra Costa and Bombe Jacques to dominate the charts, will the different attitudes of the continental and oriental minds allow a breath of fresh air to blow through the industry over here?

Survival of the fittest is the rule in the software jungle and games reviewing is a serious business for our editor.

3 EDITORIALS

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Quick on the Draw

Ariolasoft's Screen Shot Challenge cards are still drawing winners. The latest recipient of a Commodore 128 and 1570 disk drive is Graham Hill of Stapleton, Kent. With just one more draw to come in July, time is getting short if you want to try your luck with a card from Ariolasoft's Reaktor or 39 Steps packs.

For those who may be finding it difficult to buy any Ariolasoft titles, the good news is that the company has signed a distribution deal with Centresoft subsidiary PDQ. Centresoft is one of Britain's largest distributors dealing with US Gold, Ocean, Advance, English and many other major software houses. This should ensure greater availability than Ariolasoft has enjoyed lately.

The first releases through PDQ will be Starlight's *Dogfight 2087*, *Greyfell* and *Deathscape*.

Contact: Ariolasoft, 68 Long Acre, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9JH (Tel: 01-836 3411).

Atari Show Time

The Atari Computer Show was held at the Novotel Hotel in Hammersmith on April 24-26. The free arcade was a stroke of genius as hordes of players swarmed over a range of ST, 130XE and VCS 2600 machines.

It was Atari's liveliest show for years with the launch of the PC range alongside the new, faster range of Mega STs. Since Jack Tramiel defected from Commodore, the company has gained the respect it failed to draw in the past. Considering the low key advertising Atari indulges in, the ST is probably gaining as much attention as Commodore's Amiga and a price war is expected during the Christmas run up.

Companies displaying their games at the show included Psygnosis with *Terrorpods* and a demo of *Barbarian*, the latest arcade adventure.

Tynesoft is breaking new ground with ST games such as *Plutos* and *Mouse Trap* at low prices. With most other



Screen Shot ace Graham Hill gets his hands on his prizes (Press Officer

Amanda Barry and Product Manager Mark Easton aren't part of the prize!).

companies producing games around the £20 mark and higher, Tynesoft is pinning prices down to under £15 though the games are claimed to be just as sophisticated. Also on show was *Drawmaster*, *Who Dares Wins II* and a £3.99 compilation of *Wizard*, *Pengon*, *Jet Set Willy* and *Balloonacy*, all for the XL/XE range.

Dipping a toe into the games market, Robtek was showing *Shuffleboard* and *Pool* (on a two game disk) and chess simulation,

owners looking for an upgrade.

Proving to be one of the most prolific of ST game producers, Microdeal showed *Gold Runner*,



Jupiter Probe, *Airball* and *Tanglewood*.

Although much of the show was given over to the ST, there was plenty to keep XL/XE owners occupied. Many of the stands in the downstairs exhibition hall were taken by retailers offering bargain priced new and remaindered stock.

By far the most interesting product was Mirrorsoft's *Film Director* package which enables



you to produce your own cartoon story. To demonstrate the capabilities of the software, Mirrorsoft had commissioned a few folk tales from art students at Kingston Polytechnic.

The portents for success of the ST were underlined at the Show by a staggering array of products for business and leisure use. My award for the most promising game utility would go to Tom Hudson's *CAD 3D System*. Using special LCD-lensed spectacles, the world of holographic reality was displayed using a bouncing ball demo. This was the first time I had seen a 3D simulator which had real depth, but the price of over £150 for the special glasses will limit the number of users; but it's one development I'll be keeping my eyes on.

Catch A Blast

Martech has released *Catch 23* for the Amstrad and Spectrum computers with Commodore 64 and Atari ST versions to follow next month.

The game is a vector graphics game with a Starwars theme. The enemy have launched an interceptor satellite know as CK23 which sits in geo-stationary orbit waiting to launch a laser attack. Soon the satellite is joined by more of its kin and the threat increases.

The satellite development site is a heavily protected island which must be penetrated in your search for the CK23 blueprints. Entire villages must be searched and buildings explored as you try to complete your mission.



Catch 23 — Martech

The map for the game covers a large area, all of which is displayed vectors in the computer screen. Useful objects and clues await the alert espionage agent but security tanks, alarms and surveillance cameras lie between you and your goal.

Catch 23 costs £8.95 on cassette, with the Amstrad disk version priced at £13.95 and the Commodore disk will be £12.95. The price of the ST version has yet to be announced.

Contact: Martech, Martech House, Bay Terrace, Pevensey Bay, East Sussex BN24 6EE (Tel: 0323 768456).

Everybody is jumping on the 16-bit bandwagon. Logotron, BBC micro software producers, has spread its interests to include the ST with the launch of **XOR**. Already highly successful on the BBC, **XOR** is an infuriatingly addictive maze game and Logotron also intends to produce the maze generator and construction sets for the new format in future months. We have not received the full details of Logotron's plans, but **XOR** is being converted to some of the other popular eight-bit machines.

PSS is also branching out into the ST market with a conversion of *Annals of Rome*. This would have been the first wargame for British STs if it hadn't been pipped at the post by US Gold's marketing deal with the American SSI company, but the chaps at PSS can console themselves with the thought that they are the first UK originators to leap into the ST war-game arena.

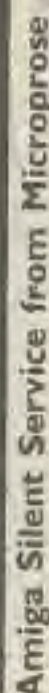
A war game of a different type is provided for the game-hungry Amiga market by Microprose. The long-awaited submarine simulator, *Silent Service*, is here at last. The simulator allows you to take charge of a World War II sub as it patrols the treacherous waters of the South Pacific. It is based on the eight-bit versions.

According to Microprose, this new game has extremely realistic sound effects and one American reviewer went overboard by saying "You can almost smell the diesel oil and feel the deck rolling beneath your feet". I'm sure if you buy a can of diesel and play the game while standing on a rocking chair the dreams of this reviewer will be fulfilled!

**Contact: Logotron Ltd,
Dales Brewery, Gwydir
Street, Cambridge CB1 (Yel:
0223 323656).**

PSS, 452 Stoney Stanton
Rd, Coventry CV6 5DG
(Tel: 0203 667556).

Microprose Software Ltd, 2 Market Place, Tetbury, Gloucester GL8 8DA (Tel: 0666 54326).



In its assault on the British market, SSI spearheads its campaign on the Commodore 64 with a compilation of four games for the price of one.

The new package from US Gold contains *Battle for Normandy*, *Knights of the Desert*, *Combat Leader* and *Tigers in the Snow*, promising hours of World War action for £14.99 (£19.99 on disk).

Fantasy freaks have also been catered for with the release of *Phantasie III — The Wrath of Nikademus*. Deep in his dungeons, Nikademus awaits the final

confrontation with a new hero of your own design or one of the characters which appeared in the earlier games. After over 30 hours of real time battles against over 80 types of monsters, you eventually face Nikademus himself. Armed only with your collected spells and calculated cunning the end of the saga is within your grasp.

Phantasie III is available for the Commodore 64, Atari ST and Apple II at £19.99.

Contact: Jerry Howells, US Gold Ltd, Units 2 & 3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX (Tel: 021-356 3388).



Seven Audiogenic games for £19.95 (£25.95 disk) doesn't appear to be a budget price until you do a bit of maths. Each game costs the equivalent of £2.85 (£3.56 disk) which puts them fair and square in the budget range.

The titles contained on the compilation include the recently released *Uridium* clone — *Psychastria*. The other six titles are: arcade adventures *Thunderstruck* and *Last of the Free*, outer space shoot-em-up *Ultron*, platform puzzles *Contraption* and *Wizzy's Mansion* with the lunar landing *Space Ranger* rounding off the collection.

**Contact: ASL Ltd, 12
Chiltern Enterprise Centre,
Station Rd, Theale,
Berkshire RG7 4AA (Tel:
0734 303181).**

B * Psychostralia * Wizzy's Mansion
C * Thunderstruck * Space Ranger
 * Ultram * Last of
 * Contraption the FREE

7 Astounding Audiogenic Games for your BBCi



▷▷ More ▷



Sandra and Wyn Holloway get to work on the design of Speed King Mk II.

Barbarian Squares Up

Psygnosis and Palace software houses were exchanging urgent phone-calls recently. To their horror they discovered that they were both working on two very different games which shared the same title. *Barbarian* is an arcade adventure or a slash-em-up swordfight depending on which company you follow. Sanity has prevailed and a gentlemanly agreement has resulted in Palace's swordfight adding a short subtitle to its original name.

Psygnosis' game involves a barbarian in the underground world of Durgan, ruled by an evil overlord. Hegor the Barbarian has to defeat evil Necron's traps and monsters in this icon-controlled all-action game.

Palace's offering is far more controversial. First, there is a scantily clad maiden on the cover, then the action involves a move which will slice the head off your opponent. As the head bounces onto the ground, blood spurts from the decapitated corpse and it sinks to the floor. I can't see the chain stores taking too kindly to this kind of realism but it's not as gruesome as sounds and is well worth seeking out.

Contact: Psygnosis, FREE-POST, Liverpool L33 3AB (Tel: 051-647 8118).

Palace Software, 275 Pentonville Road, London N1 (Tel: 01-278 0751).

Frank's for the Memory

Mary Shelley's anti-hero is about to terrorise computers everywhere. As a follow-up to *Dracula*, CRL's next monster adventure will be *Frankenstein*.

Like its precursor, *Frankenstein* will incorporate digitised horror images and will also carry an age limit certificate set by the British Board of

Film Censors. The adventure is being written by Michael Steffens, the talented yarn spinner who produced *Dracula*.

Contact: CRL Group, 9 Kings Yard, Carpenters Rd, London E15 2DH (Tel: 01-985 2391).

Michael Steffens (left) and CRL's Mike Hodges show grave interest.



Budgetvision

After Firebird Silver's *Park Patrol* boldly displayed Activision's name on its screens, it comes as no surprise to hear that the two companies have tied the knot on a marketing deal. Over the next few months, 40 of Activision's old titles will appear on the Silver range label.

Already on release are *I of the Mask*, *Pitfall I* and *Pitfall II* plus *Back to the Future* at a realistic price of £1.99. Whether *Ghostbusters* has been included remains to be seen, but the deal can only give Firebird the extra boost it needs.

Konix Stick Up

Welsh firm Konix claim UK sales of around 300,000 for the Speed King joystick during the first year of trading. This landmark was actually reached two months after the first birthday and a cake was ordered to mark the event.

The joystick is currently undergoing a 'waggle' test which rotates the stick handle at 450 rpm to prove the reliability of the unit. As part of the durability guarantee, Konix claim returns have been low at under half a percent. However, our samples have not fared particularly well. Of the three sticks we received when they were launched, none are now working properly. Perhaps we just got a bad batch (or perhaps we shouldn't employ gorillas here — none of our joysticks last very long!).

Contact: Konix Computer Products, Unit 13, Sirhowy Hill Industrial Estate, Tredegar, Gwent NP2 4QZ (Tel: 049525 5913).

'THING' BOUNCES BACK

TEST DRIVE A THING TODAY!

Quartz Halogen 'Pop-Up' headlights just like a Porsche 924.

Audible warning device pressing results in a 'boing, boing, boing' noise.

Extra large flappy cheeks, watch out for tweaking grandads.

Trendy designer cut off T-Shirt (causes nasty draught round your coils).

Stupid grin, take a quick look in the mirror when playing this game. See what we mean?

Leather boinging gloves for a sure fire grip on that joystick.

All round independent coil spring suspension guaranteed for over 100,000 boings.

Size 14 racing tread flippers for inflight stability and a sure-footed landing.



Gremlin's springiest star is set to bounce straight back into a new adventure.

Following his world saving exploits against the evil toy goblin and his monstrous toys, Thing's enjoyed his much needed recuperation, oiled his spring and is now raring to go. What next?... he must finish the job properly and halt the factory computer auto producing these hideous toys.

But as superfit as he is and fast as he can move there's danger hidden around every bend... goblins lurking to drain his oil, water rushing to bowl him over, iron chickens fielding dastardly deadly eggs.



A quick hand and dogged determination are needed if you're to get anywhere with Thing in his latest escapade.

Fast and furious action is the order of the day and a good sense of direction would be helpful to guide Thing round such a complex location.

Available on

CBM64/128	AMSTRAD	SPECTRUM 48/128K
£ 9.99 c	£ 9.99 c	MSX
£14.99 d	£14.99 d	£ 7.99 c

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HOGAN'S ALLEY Use your Zapper light gun to shoot the gangsters.



CLU CLU LAND The evil Sea Urchin has hidden the gold in an underground mystery maze.



DUCK HUNT There's a duck in the air! You've only got three shots to bag this duck. And if you miss, even your dog laughs at you in this fast-action Zapper Gun game.



GYROMITE You've got to keep R.O.B.'s gyroscope spinning to help a mad scientist de-activate the dynamite in his laboratory in order to play this action-packed game!



GOLF Choose your clubs. Control your swings. Select the angle of every shot. It's Nintendo GOLF and there's not a video golf game on par with it anywhere!

For the first time in the UK direct from Japan comes Nintendo, the home entertainment system with genuine arcade-quality graphics. Nintendo make 2 out of 3 of all the world's coin-op arcade machines, so they know what they're doing. And already, in Japan 9½ million homes have a Nintendo home entertainment system.

Now you can enjoy the amazing 52 colour 3-D graphics of Nintendo. (On most home computers, you've been lucky to get 16 colours until now!) Nintendo's superb graphics give the games a convincing true 3-D feel with actual shadows which add depth to the characters.

Already there are 27 Nintendo Game Paks available in the UK and more are being added to the software library all the time. But there's even more to Nintendo than the best games you've ever seen...

Nintendo Entertainment System

For the first time home entertainment enters a new dimension.

Because when you own a Nintendo entertainment system you also get a buddy to play with, a Robotic Operating Buddy to be exact (or R.O.B. to his friends). He's your partner. Seat him next to you, send him signals from your tv screen and together you can tackle the enemy.

The Zapper Gun

Never before has there been a video gun of this calibre. The astonishing light sensitive Zapper Gun lets you shoot moving targets with pinpoint accuracy from up to 16 feet! If you think you're a sharp shooter the Zapper Gun will test your skill to the full.

Nintendo or Super Nintendo, the choice is yours.

Which set do you want? NINTENDO's superb high-quality action costs £129.99* for control deck, mains transformer, two hand controls, and one free Super Mario Bros Game Pak. DELUX NINTENDO costs £199.99* for the amazing Zapper Gun, R.O.B., and two free games, Gyromite and Duck Hunt.

ultimate video game...

NintendoTM



Where you can buy Nintendo

Nintendo is available from the stockists featured. If you have any questions or have difficulty obtaining the product, write to HiTech Electronic Services Ltd., Unit 2B, 200 Rickmansworth Road, Watford WD1 7JS. Or 'phone: 09232 41811.



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Gloucester Toy Shop
Alders Department Stores
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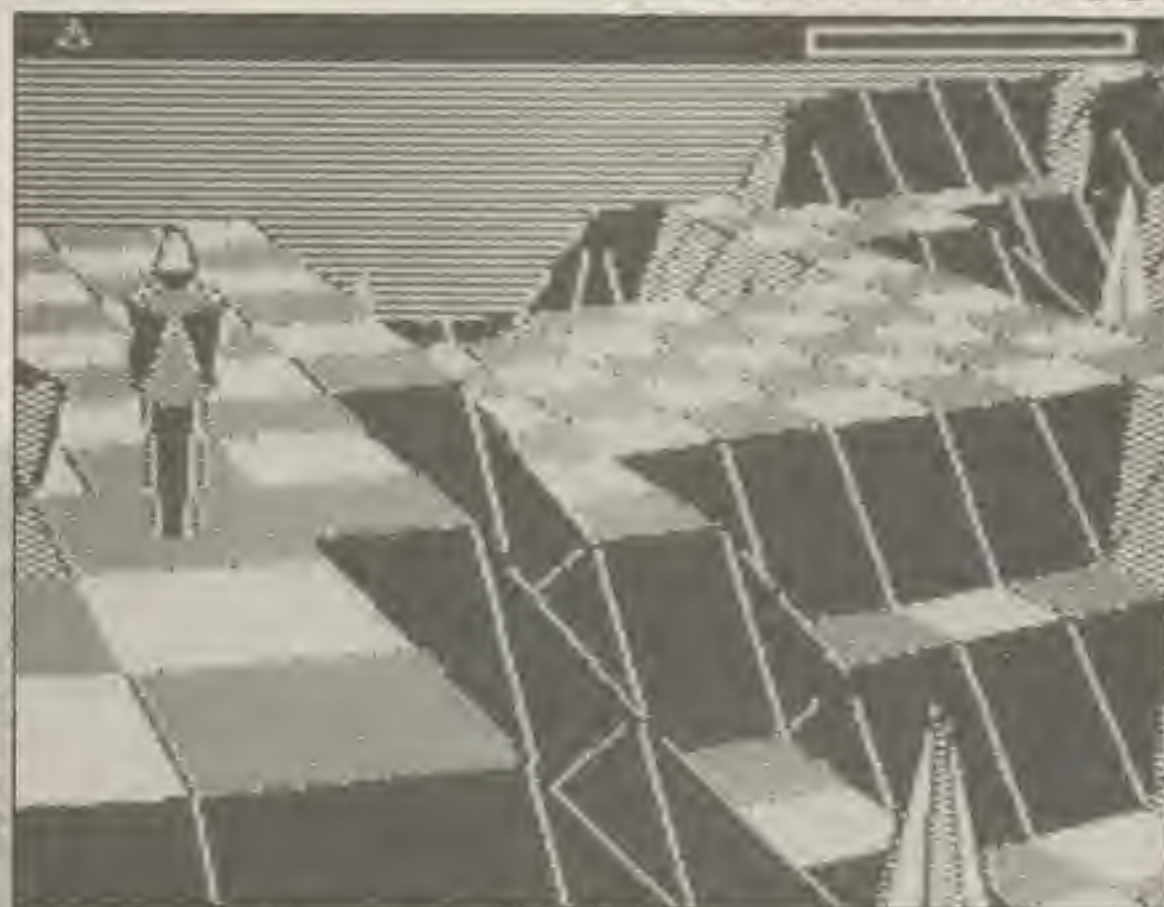
Fenwicks
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Telebank

*Recommended retail price

Far, far away is a world of pure energy ruled by the Sentinel. In this Spectrum conversion of Firebird's original and very addictive game you must battle the Sentinel over a staggering 10,000 landscapes all packed into just 48K!

The landscapes of this strange land appear as plateaus that rise into peaks. On top of the highest peak stands the Sentinel. This powerful being slowly rotates, scanning the land beneath it and absorbing anything with a surplus of energy (The standard energy unit is a tree worth one unit of energy). You have other ideas as you are in a generating, energy-converting transfer robot that can use the energy from the trees to build robots and boulders and to climb the heights — in order to do battle with the Sentinel.

Title: The Sentinel
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Firebird
Price: £8.95



Although you can rotate you can't actually move so you must travel the landscape by building another robot and transferring to it. You can then re-absorb your old shell and so conserve your energy. To get to the higher plateaus you may also need to build a boulder on which you can stand a new robot and so on until you can get close enough to absorb the Sentinel.

The Sentinel naturally makes this as difficult as possible — it's difficult enough finding your way around a landscape full of deep holes and steep cliffs, and if it catches you in its deadly gaze it will start absorbing your energy, unit by unit. But it can only do this if it can see the base of the square or boulder you're standing on. If it can't, it turns the nearest tree into a meanie to flush you out.

To help you in your quest you get a map of the landscape displayed on the screen before you begin, but this is soon forgotten when the action heats up.

The secret seems to be to absorb every tree you can find so you can afford to build boulders — they cost two units — and robot shells — they cost three units — find the Sentinel and then keep track of the direction and speed he's rotating. Then, time your attack carefully, sneak up behind him

and absorb him. Landscape one completed, only 9,999 to go!

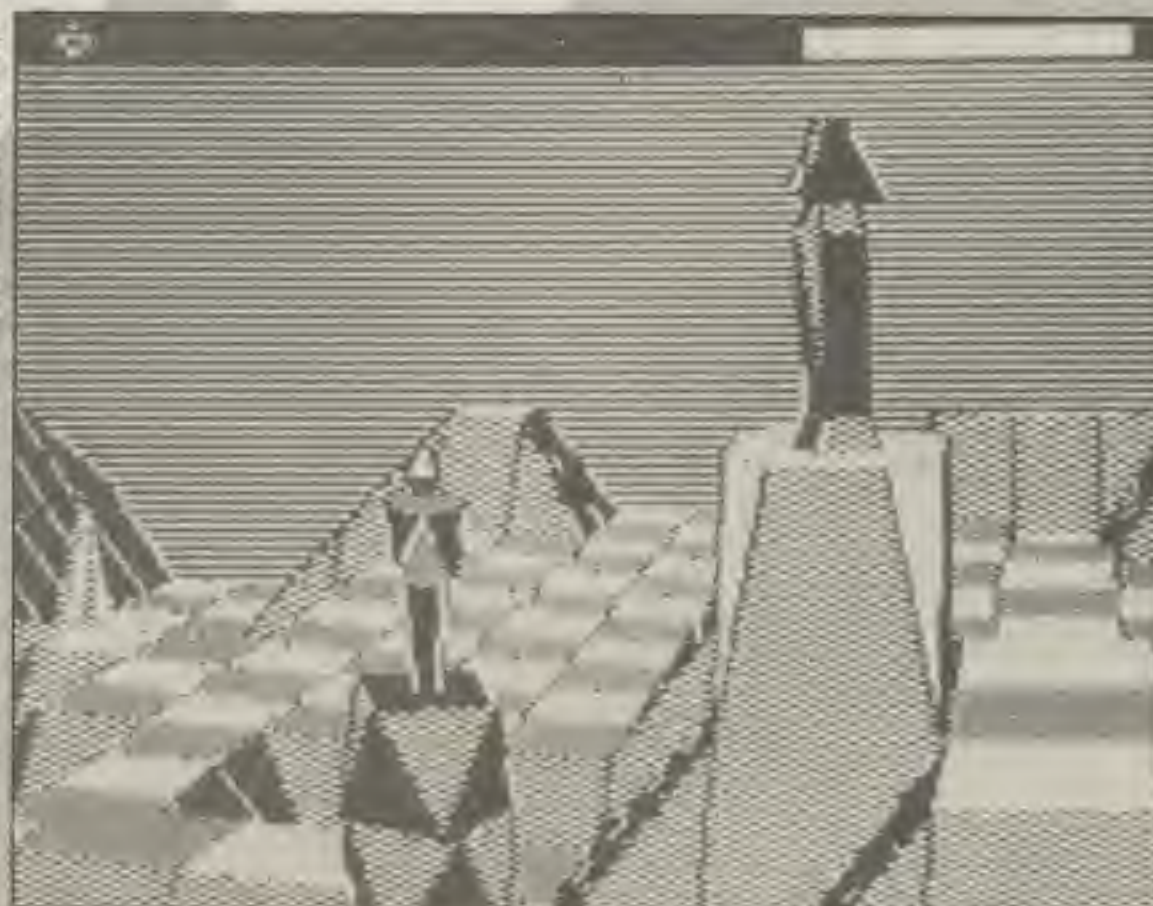
Luckily, you don't have to attempt every single landscape as you are given a code, once you've defeated a Sentinel, for the next landscape plus the energy you have left. So, if you complete landscape 133 with 15 units of energy left, then you'll be given the code for landscape 149.

As you progress through the landscapes the game gets harder and

harder. The Sentinel is joined by one or more sentries that are just as deadly as the Sentinel, and must be absorbed before you can tackle the Sentinel. To make things worse the landscapes get more barren, which means less cover for you and almost constant harassment from the Sentinel and his sentries. For example, in one level you begin in a wide open space surrounded by a circle of peaks containing the Sentinel and eight sentries!

This Spectrum conversion is actually quicker to play than the C64 original and features the option to define the screen colours and has different landscape codes, so even experienced Sentinel players will have to start from scratch.

One of the best and most original games that I've seen this year.



SCORELINE

Impact	90%
Originality	95%
Gameplay	80%
X-Factor	85%

OVERALL 88%

There used to be peace between the Citizens and the Rubble Runners but a few natural disasters soon changed that. Everyone started to blame everyone else. The priests built a huge energy dome to seal off the city and walled off the temple, causing a rift with the Rubble Runners who were relegated to the ruins and sewers outside the city.

How you came to be involved in all of this, you're not quite sure. You remember going to a party and ending up in a place you didn't recognise, stark naked! That wasn't too bad, but you had also lost your time machine and it was while you were looking for it that you discovered that the water level in the sewers was getting dangerously high. Rushing back to warn the Rubble Runners, you discovered that you have been convicted as a spy in your absence and the village shaman is looking forward gleefully to your execution!

Your first problem with this game is to decide exactly what sort of character you want to be. You have 60 attribute points to distribute among five characteristics — strength, endurance, intelligence, charisma and luck. How you divide them up is entirely up to you — the game plays differently according to what you choose, so experimentation is the name of the game.

Your second problem is escaping from the shaman's guard. Combat is a beat-em-up routine featuring large cartoon style characters. It is your strength, endurance and skill against his.

Once outside the village, assuming you win and the guards lose, you are presented with a series of options, all menu driven. What choices you have depends on the nature of your character. If luck is with you, you may be given the chance to sneak past a guard. If it isn't you will have to fight him.

As you progress, you will discover more places to explore and problems to solve. Useful objects or information can sometimes be obtained by that strangely old-fashioned method — being nice. On other occasions, you have to go in with club swinging — the animation for which, incidentally, looks like a cross between a trapeze artist and a gibbon!

You actually have two aims: to save the Rubble Runners and to find your time machine — vital since it is hoped that you will be able to transfer your hero across to other forthcoming modules in the series.

My first impression of *Doc the Destroyer* was that it was like nothing I had ever seen before. The strange mixture of combat and adventure works very well and the game is not biased too much either way so if you don't enjoy one particular aspect you can enjoy the other. The game is presented superbly with bright colourful graphics, and the portability of the hero is an added bonus. Melbourne House has been struggling to produce a top notch game for some time now. With Doc, I think they've got it and their waning fortunes may take a turn for the better.

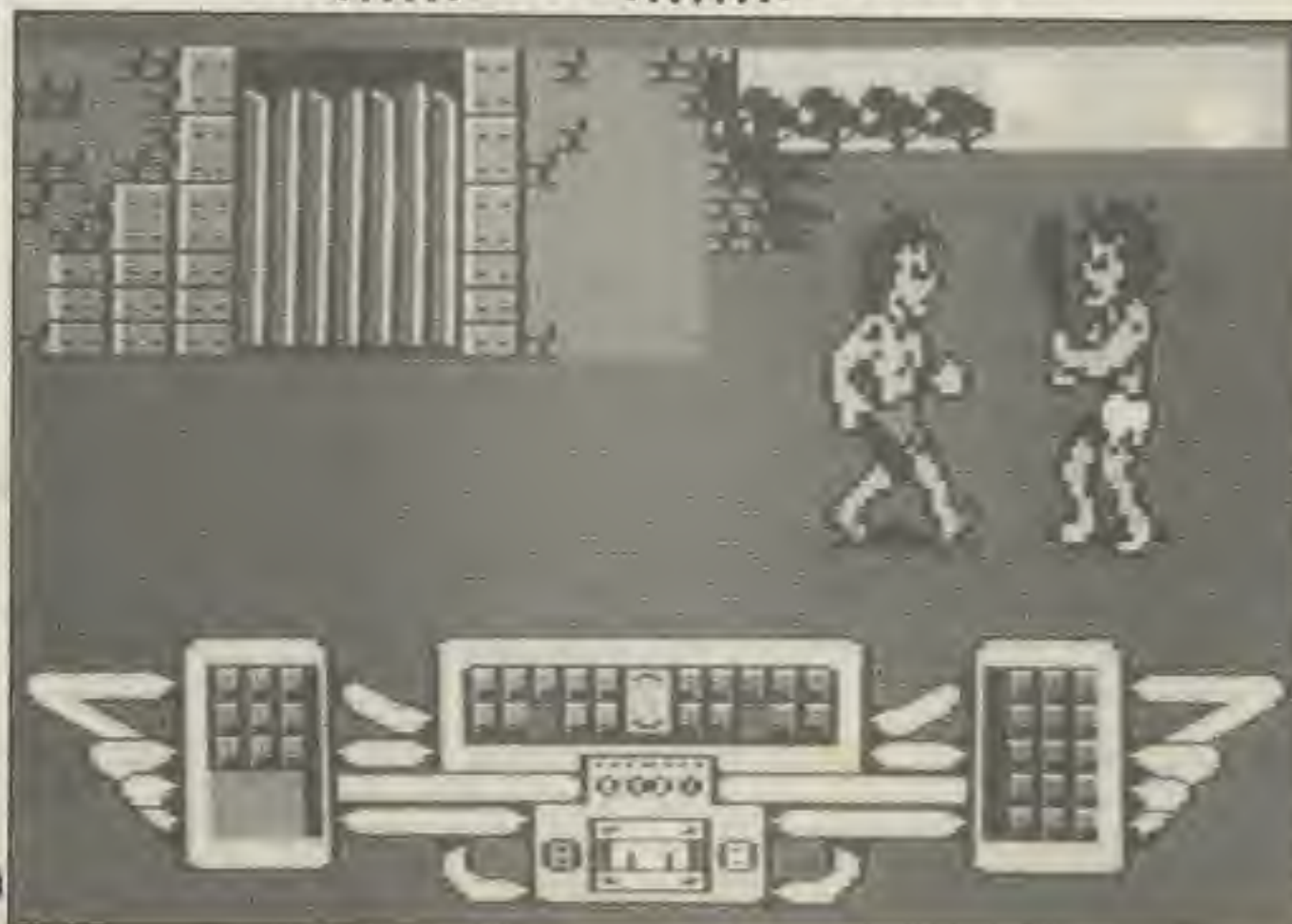
After several attempts at beat-em-up adventures, Melbourne House have hit the jackpot.



Title: Doc the Destroyer
Computer: C64
Supplier: Melbourne House
Price: £9.95

SCORELINE

Impact	95%
Originality	90%
Gameplay	85%
X-Factor	90%
OVERALL	90%



The SHADOWS OF MORDOR

The arrival of the second part of Melbourne House's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy has been eagerly awaited. Firstly, by the most avid Tolkien fans who will lap up anything on the subject regardless of quality. Secondly, by those more discerning Tolkien fans who will want to see if the *Shadows of Mordor* resembles the book rather more than the first part did — eg no more references to orcish heavy metal bands. And finally, there are the adventure freaks who will want to know whether the game is going to be more challenging and faster than part one; especially on the C64. And also, generally, whether the game is actually worth parting their hard earned money. Well, just read on and all will be revealed.

The Shadows of Mordor deals with book four of the *Lord of the Rings*, ie the second half of volume two — *The Two Towers*. Frodo and Sam have left the rest of the company and are striking out alone for Mordor where they must go if they are to destroy the ring that Frodo is carrying. This is the One Ring, secretly manufactured by Sauron, who is now trying, using everything in his power, to get it back so he can use it for his own evil purposes.

The game starts with the pair on the eastern edge of the lake Nen-Hithoel. Ahead of them lie the Dead Marshes, the Desolate Plains and, finally, Mordor itself with the city of Minas Morgul rising from the mountains.

The first problem is to get down a steep cliff. Some nifty ropework is required here. At the bottom of the cliff, wait until Smeagol, also known as Gollum puts in an appearance. You will need him to help you out but he is shy and slimy too and you will need to extract a solemn promise from him before he will guide further once you have made your way across the maze of marshes.



Title:	The Shadows of Mordor
Computer:	Spectrum, Amstrad
Supplier:	Melbourne House
Price:	£7.95 Spectrum; £8.95 Amstrad

Hiding from the Nazgûl — Sauron's nine ring wraiths — and the orcs shouldn't prove too difficult if you heed Smeagol's advice. Convincing Faramir that you are who you say you are may prove to be more tricky, however. But Smeagol will lead you to the secret entrance — if you can find him, he tends to disappear a lot. Now all that remains is a final encounter with Shelob — a giant spider — in her lair.

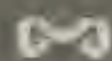
The game allows you to take the part of Frodo, Sam or both, but I think that most players will stick with the first option. The parser is the standard Melbourne House 'Inglish'. This is a fairly sophisticated

parser but it does have one or two quirks. 'Examine' is not particularly well supported, for instance. Also frequent references are made to objects in the text which are not understood by the program, and although you can use 'all' you can't use 'except', 'but' must be used instead. Confusing and very odd as most phrases such as 'pick up all but the short sword' don't sound quite right.

Not every version of this game comes with graphics. There are none on the 48K Spectrum, although they are present on the 128 version. The Amstrad has limited graphics, the C64 slightly better ones but you can expect the



a set of crossroads with the mountains of Mordor to the east.



disk versions to have full pictures although these haven't been finished yet.

So what of the game itself? Well, it is certainly harder to play than the first part, but I am not so sure that the problems are particularly wonderful. There is a lot of maze work and back-tracking to be done. This is not necessarily a bad thing but the game is spoilt by one major design fault: the game is so big that it allows no facility to quit and start again, so has to be loaded in again or a saved position loaded. This is really off-putting if you happen to die in the first few minutes which, incidentally, is quite likely. Surely, Melbourne House could have removed a couple of locations and used the memory saved to provide a quit option. As it stands, I would recommend that your first move should be to save the game at the beginning *before* you even make a move.

This is the first Melbourne House/Tolkien joint production that doesn't come with a copy of the book. This keeps the cost of the game down to a reasonable eight or nine pounds. As the books only cost about three pounds — a lot less if you buy them in bulk, it just goes to show that someone somewhere was making a lot of profit out of *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* which both retailed at about 15 pounds each! *The Shadows of Mordor* is a much better game than its predecessor and much better value for money, but there is still room for improvement. Perhaps in part three ...

SCORELINE

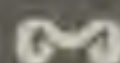
Impact	65%
Originality	70%
Gameplay	55%
X-Factor	65%

OVERALL

64%



the Morannon pass



Title: Colonial Conquest
Computer: C64
Supplier: SSI (US Gold)
Price: £24.99 (disk)

Are you a power mad meglomaniac? Do you find it difficult to find a game that quenches your thirst for power? Then why not try *Colonial Conquest*. In the game you compete with five other human or computer opponents for global domination! You must lie, cheat, back stab, bribe and battle your way to the top.

The game is set in the turbulent times between 1800 and the First World War, which started in 1914. The players take control of each of the world's major powers and attempt to lead England, France, Germany, Russia, USA and Japan to victory. Choose your country, practice your lies and sharpen your knife and you're ready to play. The computer can provide up to five totally ruthless opponents that can play on nine levels of deception, if you can't find enough humans to cheat and double cross.

The screen display scrolls over a map of the world that's divided into 131 easily conquered regions. Each region has a particular type of terrain, taxation value — the amount of money you get from it each year — and an army, if it's a neutral country. These neutrals only defend the region but since some can consist of 400,000 troops they're not to be taken for granted.

You begin the game with the revenue from the lands you own, which isn't very much as your empire is restricted to your own borders. You already have an army of sorts and maybe even some fleets that can be used for naval supremacy or to transport armies.

The game is played in a series of turns each representing a season of the year. Winter is the most important turn as this is when revenues are calculated, which means you've got just four turns to grab as much territory as possible!

During a turn you can move your armies into the next territory — this is called invading, spy on opponents, scout out troops, subvert neutral countries to try and cause a coup, fortify your defences and even buy off an unwanted enemy. At the end of each turn the computer calculates the results of the battles and usually the bigger army wins. But this isn't always the case since armies differ in strength and cost.

A COMPUTER STRATEGY GAME OF GLOBAL DOMINATION FROM THE 1880s TO EARLY 1900

COLONIAL CONQUEST



Tony Heath finds a way of satisfying his craving for power.

For example British troops are better than Russian troops but cost almost twice as much! Consequently each power poses a different challenge, both economically and geographically, and some powers, such as Germany, are certain to clash with others.

Colonial Conquest is obviously inspired by board games such as *Risk* and *Diplomacy*, but it takes the idea further. The neutral countries provide a platform from which players can build up revenues and forces but sooner or later they too will clash as war breaks out. Two other scenarios — 1880 and 1914 — begin with most of the neutrals

already occupied, making war inevitable, but don't expect these scenarios to follow the history books. For example, as England in 1914 I allied with Germany against France and won!

A superb strategy game and a must for all budding imperialists.

SCORELINE

Impact	75%
Originality	80%
Gameplay	90%
X-Factor	65%

OVERALL

78%

NEMESIS

A few months ago while watching a friend of mine play through all the levels of *Nemesis* at an arcade I remember thinking myself to, "Wouldn't it be great if *Nemesis* was converted for the Commodore?"

Well, I was quite surprised when Konami actually did so, especially after the dreadful *Jailbreak*.

For those of you who know nothing about the game, the plot goes something like this: the planet Nemesis is under all out attack from space and, being a peace-loving race, has found itself defenceless - only you can save it (yawn, yawn).

The levels within the game represent eight different locations, eg the Easter Islands. They are all superbly drawn and faithful to the original arcade version. Both your ship and the alien's are well drawn and animated, too. But onto the game itself. To progress in the game you need weapons and to get them you need credits (money to you); to get these you need to destroy waves of aliens who keep on dropping in on you.

The weapons are as follows: Speedo, which will turbo boost your engine; Missile, which is an air to ground missile (very handy);

Title: Nemesis
Computer: Commodore 64
Supplier: Konami
Price: £8.95 cass/£14.95 disk

Jailbreak was a disappointment but Konami's latest conversion is solid gold.

Double, this handy gadget allows you to fire upwards (good for tight spots) and the devastating Laser, which will rip through enemy craft like a knife through butter. Then there is your ultimate weapon -

the Multiple, this is the big one; add this to your ship and you'll be away. It is actually a little red pod which doubles your fire, but you can only have two at any one time (typical, eh!) Last but not least there's the Whadayah mean what's that? It's a mystery of course. Well, Konami has been a bit sneaky actually because what you always get is a shield.

I found *Nemesis* highly playable and extremely addictive. It has good clear graphics, smooth scrolling, slick joystick response and excellent music which sounds just like the arcade version. What else can I say, except go out and buy it. Oh, and keep up the good work Konami.

SCORELINE

Impact
Originality
Gameplay
Value for money

OVERALL

94%





talk back

Here's your chance to voice your opinion of the games scene. Send your letters to: Talkback, Computer Gamer, 1 Golden Square, London W1R 3AB.

MSX GROUPIES

Dear Gamer,

I wondered if you might mention our MSX user group in your magazine as, judging by your letters page, a good many MSX users read your publication.

MSX Link International is a non-profit making user group with members in many countries. We publish a monthly newsletter which contains five to six pages of news, help pages, new MSX software releases, pen pals (many of them from abroad) and reviews.

Our current newsletter lists no less than 47 new software titles, all released in the last month — not bad for a 'dead' machine, eh!

Anyone who would like to contact us should write to: David Webb, 11 Ayscough Avenue, Spalding, Lancs.

Thank you for remembering us MSX users in your magazine.

Keith Neal,
MSX Link publicity officer

Dear Gamer,

Until recently I was an avid **Gamer** reader I have bought most of the 24 issues, but I stopped buying the magazine in the new year because it got too boring. You also only seemed to concentrate on three computers.

Then someone at school told me about the "Great New Look" so I bought the February edition and it was brilliant. A letters page, **more** competitions, **more** reviews — of games for other machines; I couldn't wait for the next issue. It was equally spectacular!

Then came the April issue: 25 reviews for the Commodore 64 — we're not **all** C64 lovers — and only 16 for five other machines; **no** competition results; **no** comic strip (thank God) and only **two** letters. Mind you, at least in the April edition you decided it was a good idea to tell us what computer a listing was for at the **beginning**, so you don't end up typing the whole listing out and then find out it's for the C64 (surprise, surprise!)

I am a proud owner of a Beeb, my mate has an Atari and we were both very disappointed with the April issue — there was only one review for each computer. Come on **Gamer**, don't let the high standard of their last few months drop, and let's see some more BBC and Atari reviews too.

PS I like the little fellow who keeps popping up on the your pages. What's his name?

Nick Rawlinson,
Preston, Lancs

Hmmm, that told us didn't it. Points taken but have a look and you'll see we've mended our ways on the competition front. We did get a bit behind on results, but you'll see we have had a blitz on them this month to make up, okay!

*The number of reviews featured usually reflects the software output for that month. We're doing our best to even out the inequalities to make **Gamer** a better bargain each month. As a Beeb owner you got a pretty good deal last month.*

Oh yes, the little fellow's name is Snott.

RELATIVELY ABSENT

Dear Gamer,

I am a very proud Einstein owner and a very disappointed one too. It was in July 1985 that I first discovered

Computer Gamer — I noticed an Einstein competition on the front cover and picked it up and started reading it. I discovered some Einstein reviews towards the back too.

For the next three months I bought **Gamer** then, to my horror, it was a case of 'wot no more Einstein info!' Well, it wasn't until I bought the March 1987 edition that I discovered your Talkback section, so here are some ideas on how you should repent for dropping the Einstein:

- 1) Einstein reviews — there are a lot of Einstein games about, eg *The Attack of the Killer Tomatoes* (some of my friends who own Spectrums haven't even got it yet!)
- 2) A review of the Spectrum Emulator. This is a new device for the Einstein which allows you to run some Spectrum games.

I hope one or both of these pieces appear soon — would especially like to see a piece on the emulator.

Hedley Lagrand,
Bodmin, Cornwall

With Dixon's special offer on Einsteins I'll get my reviewers to work on a small but perfectly formed article immediately.

WACCI OFFER

Dear Gamer,

I am writing to tell you about WACCI, the rapidly growing Worldwide Amstrad CPC User Group which is based in Uxbridge, Middlesex.

WACCI is now in its eighth month and its circulation is now around 200. We pride ourselves on producing the best amateur magazine on the market. It is A4 format and includes illustrations and advertisements along with articles and columns on all the popular subjects, as well as some of the less popular ones.

The club covers the UK, Spain, Germany, Norway and Australia. Benefits include a 20 per cent discount on CPC software, hardware discounts and a free

AMIGA DIET?

Dear Gamer,

First let me congratulate you on your superb magazine. The first issue I bought was April 1987, which I only purchased for the Star Trek review and was surprised at how good the rest of the magazine was.

But onto the main point of the letter. I own an Amiga A1000 and was delighted with the articles on Amiga software. I would be pleased if you would consider having a special section devoted to the Amiga — and possibly the Atari ST — telling us about the latest releases and news etc. The occasional software review wouldn't go amiss either.

Speaking of Amiga software, could you please ask Beyond to release an Amiga version of Star Trek. With the Amiga A500 being nearly the same price as the Atari ST there is no excuse for not doing so.

In answer to your request for comments on a comic strip, I think a strip would be great — **Zzap! 64's** comic strip was excellent, pity it had to end so soon.

But, carry on producing issues of this standard and your magazine will go a long way anyway.

**D. W. Norman,
Chiswick, London**

Our policy is to cover all games machines and Top Notch will continue to cover the Amiga and ST. As far as Star Trek is concerned, Beyond do have plans but I couldn't squeeze an approximate year of release from them!

MASTERFUL MAG

Dear Gamer,

I am a Commodore owner and I buy quite a few games so naturally I get your magazine. I like it: your reviewers are very good and they put their points across with wit and clarity. Well done, **Gamer**.

Two things: first, you reviewed **Masters of the Universe** in your April issue and quoted its price as £9.99. Did you know that for a limited period it is being sold for £4.99?

Secondly, can I ask who the artist was

who illustrated PBM Update and is it the same person who illustrated the article on page 34?

Keep up the good work.

**Tracy Hewitt,
Kidderminster**

Quite right, Tracy. Boots did a special offer of one Masters game at full price and the other at £4.99.

Our artist is a **Gamer** discovery by the name of Allan Batchelor. You'll definitely be seeing more of his work in future issues and we'll even start paying him too!

talk back

NORTHERN BIGOTRY

Dear Gamer,

Your new look conned me into buying **Computer Gamer** for the very first time after the copy which contained the ridiculous review of **World Cup Carnival**.

I found nothing had changed: no matter how you tart the magazine up the contents still remain poor.

Your reviews of **Footballer of the Year**, **The Double Arcticfox** etc were way, way off the mark. Why can't you get a decent team of reviewers together?

I urge you too buy a copy of **Commodore User** and really study it. Then perhaps you'll realise what we, the public want: honest, straight forward, intelligent reviews of current games.

Your magazine is without a doubt the worst one on the market. I'll continue to glance through it at the newsagents, but no way will I ever buy it again — unless you change the name and fool me.

**E. Hardy,
Sheffield**

You can please some of the people some of the time.

Come off it, Mr Hardy. A review is the personal opinion of the reviewer and no review is good, bad or indifferent if it is well written, honest and objective.

Whether you choose to believe one magazine rather than another is up to you but see what other people think!

Ponder for a while on the fact that your letter is the only critical one we have received recently and then ask yourself why you seem to be out of step with the rest!



software library containing lots of public domain CP/M programs as well as games and utilities written by the members themselves.

Annual membership of WACCI costs £12 (UK), £18 (Europe) and £24 (Overseas). The monthly magazine costs £1, £1.50 and £2 respectively including postage.

As a **Gamer** special offer we are offering a ten per cent discount on annual membership to any person who includes this letter with their application.

**Jeff Walker,
WACCI**

• **WACCI, 75 Greatfields Drive,
Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Middlesex.
UB8 3QN.**



SCORELINE is a guide to the entertainment value of the games we review.

ORIGINALITY is rare these days but even an old idea can be given a new twist.

GAMEPLAY is a measure of the ease with which a game can be played. Stupid ideas and lousy control systems will be penalised.

X-FACTOR gives the reviewer the chance to express an aversion to sickly coloured cassettes, permits a hangover allowance and provides an adjustment for programs that are in bad taste.



GAMER GOLDS will be awarded to those games which reach a sufficiently high overall score. The award is weighted towards Impact, Originality and Gameplay.

BANE OF THE MONTH is not always a duffer but it's certainly the kind of game which makes you reach for a crucifix to hold it at bay!



Title: Scott Adams Scoops
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: US Gold
Price: £9.99

REVIEW

One of the sad things about today's high turnover games market — in a game which lasts more than six weeks is hailed as a long-running success — is that inevitably you miss a lot of games.

US Gold is rectifying this situation to a certain extent with the release of a number of best of games collections. This particular collection of older games by Scott Adams is an adventure special. Modern adventurers may think the games a little crude — they only accept two word inputs and the parser is very unforgiving although it will give you a hint if you are close. Also the help section is minimal.

All the adventures are text only — not a bad move on the Spectrum — but unfortunately have rather short descriptions. I suppose this is because the games were written before text compression was properly developed.

The tape consists of four games: *Pirate Adventure*; *Voodoo Castle*; *Strange Odyssey* and *Buckaroo Banzai*. *Pirate Adventure* is only the second game Scott Adams wrote, yet it is a classic. The game revolves around a pirate's treasure island and your recovery of said treasure. The game is rated beginner but is quite challenging all the same.

Voodoo Castle is set in Transylvania. The poor count has been laid low by a curse and your job is to search out the castle — avoiding pitfalls — and remove the curse.

Strange Odyssey is set on a small planet. You are in a disabled space ship looking for a power crystal, to start up your ship. You're running out of air and there are marauding aliens. The usual stuff is all here.

Buckaroo Banzai is a previously un-released adventure based on the film of the same name. It is quite a difficult adventure set in the world of sci-fi and pop-groups!

None of these adventures would sell very well on their own nowadays, but four on one tape is reasonably good value. The turbo loader is reliable and there are no boring loading screens which take up space so, all in all, the collection is worth a look.

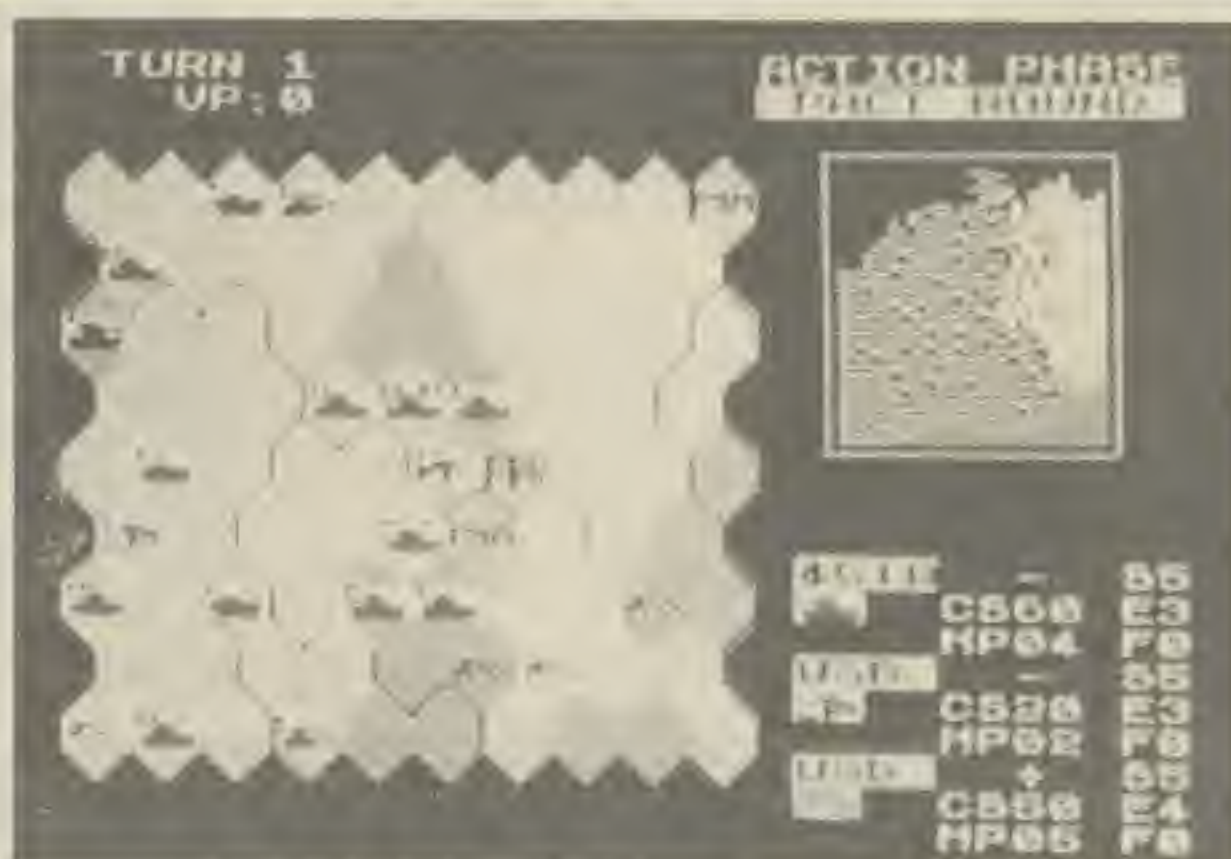
MR



SCORELINE

Impact	20%
Originality	65%
Gameplay	70%
X-Factor	75%

OVERALL 58%



Title: Battlefield Germany
Computer: ZX Spectrum
Supplier: PSS
Price: £12.95 (cass); £17.95 (disk)

PSS is well known for its war games. They include *Battle for Midway*, *Battle of Britain* and *Theatre Europe*.

PSS's latest game, *Battlefield Germany*, has been written by Cybercom Enterprises and covers much of the same ground as *Theatre Europe* although with a slightly different angle.

Battlefield Germany can be played by one or two players. The length of the game and the difficulty factor, as well as which side you take, is chosen before the game loads. Once this has happened you have to re-load the game to change them.

The game has the same plot as *Theatre Europe* in as much as the game involves the Warsaw Pact countries attacking Europe from the East German border. You have to stop them — assuming you are playing NATO that is.

Where this game differs is in the

detail it features. The maps are much more detailed and individual groups of troops/weapons are moved around the displayed terrain according to set rules and taking into account the abilities of the unit being moved. There is also a map of the whole of Germany showing all the various groups as dots.

There seems to be a nuclear option in the instructions but as the instructions are for both the Amstrad and the Spectrum I can only assume that the Amstrad has one and the Speccy hasn't — I played the Spectrum version.

MR

SCORELINE

Impact	75%
Originality	25%
Gameplay	65%
X-Factor	60%

OVERALL 56%

Title: Ace of Aces
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: US Gold
Price: £8.99

At last someone has produced a flight-sim which features the versatile De Havilland Mosquito. Historical simulations usually concentrate on the more glamorous single-engined craft, especially the Spitfire. The interest of the Mosquito, as US Gold has noticed, lies in the fact that it was a multi-role airplane; a bomber, fighter and reconnaissance plane all rolled into one.

In recognition of this, the program allows you to choose your own combination of missions. Menu choices include intercepting VIs or bombers, bombing trains and sinking U-Boats. You can select your own weapons depending on what purpose you have in mind from a combination of bombs, rockets and cannons.

So far so good. I'm well disposed towards flight simulations in general, and I set forth across the Channel with a pleasant tingle of anticipation. But that was where

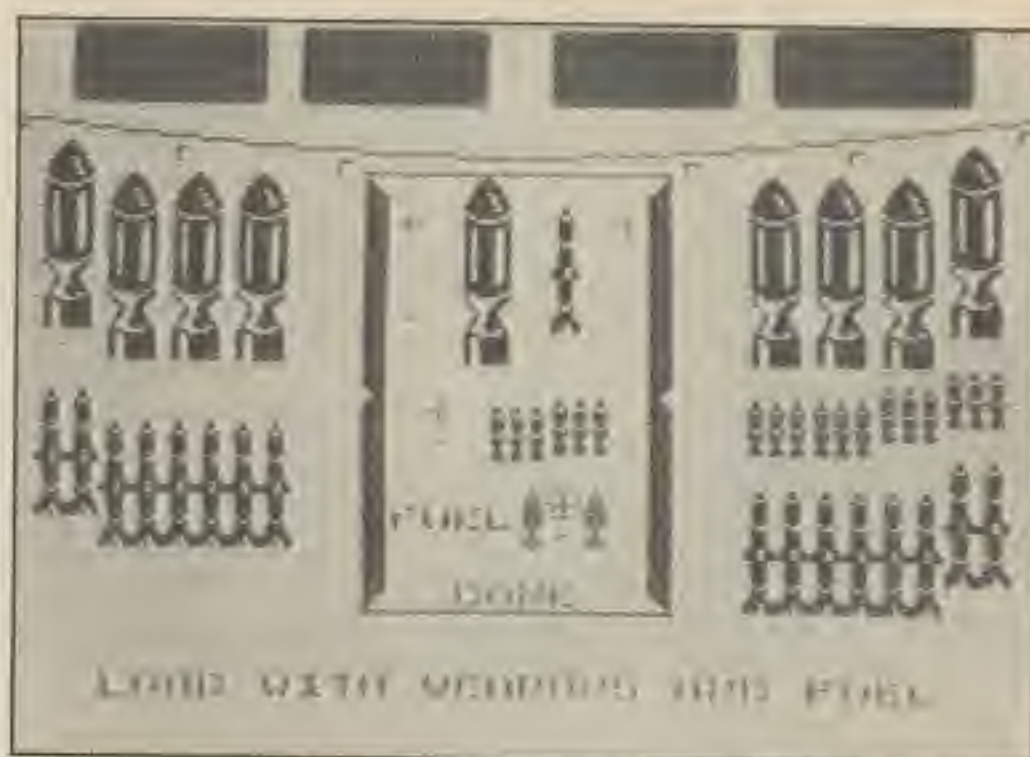
my troubles started. The aileron/elevator control is in the right place — at cockpit front, but to reach the throttles and rudder trim controls, you have to change view to right or left and then do some deft joystick work. Very distracting in the middle of a dogfight I can tell you.

I feel that US Gold has tried to be too authentic here, it spoils the natural flow that flight simulation should have. Combine this with a very flat and two-dimensional forward view and you have a program that although it promises a lot fails to deliver. **FF**

SCORELINE

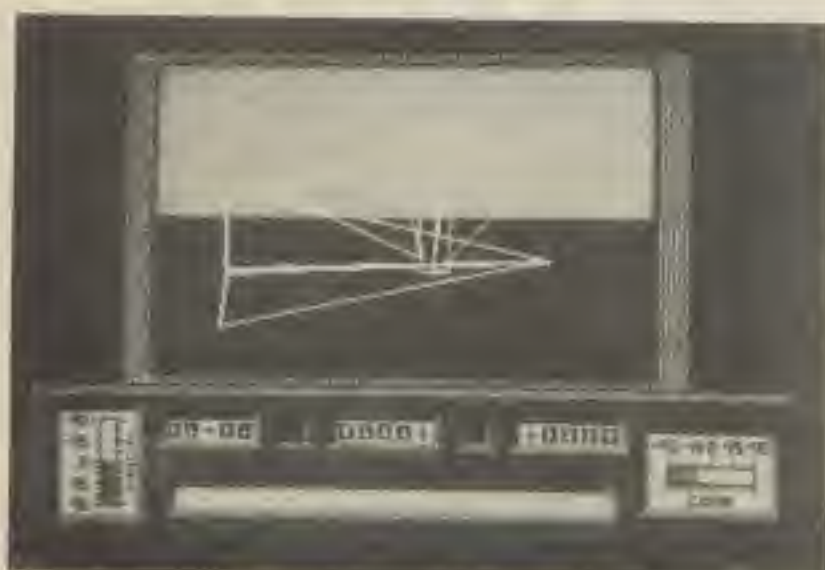
Impact	50%
Originality	65%
Gameplay	40%
X-Factor	45%

OVERALL 50%



Title: Mercenary
Computer: Amstrad
Supplier: Novagen
Price: £9.95

At last this classic Atari game has made its weary way onto a Z80 machine — the shape humble Amstrad in this case.



Mercenary is one of the vector graphics games that came out in the wake of Elite a few years ago. It soon became a firm favourite on the Atari and made its way onto the Commodore machines.

The game is part zap'em, part adventure. The story sets you up as a mercenary on the way back from a job. Unfortunately, your ship was damaged and you have to make a forced landing on the planet Targ which is at

war. The opposing sides are the Pylars who, for the record, are the goodies, and the Mechanoids, the baddies of course.

Once on the planet you have to wander around its surface and below it. Messages appear when you are in certain locations to help you on your quest. Your final objective is to purchase or steal a craft capable of an interstellar jump. To do this you must secure gainful employment with the Pylars in their war against the Mechanoids.

Stealing Mechanoid artifacts is also a good idea as is destroying Mechanoid strongholds — you win bounties for the latter. Extra equipment for your various crafts can be acquired as you go along, as can the various craft themselves.

The underground complexes are like mazes with equipment and information rooms scattered around. There is also an orbital complex for you to explore — but first you have to get there!

The planet is very large and will take a lot of exploration. However, Novagen supply a goodies package with maps, diagrams, and posters as well as a rather amateurish pseudo sci-fi book on the game. The maps etc are a great help, but the book is just silly. These

items do cost extra but not much and they are good value.

The Amstrad version is slightly different to the others as far as the maps are concerned but not hugely.

The game's graphics are really excellent. Vector graphics on the Amstrad are difficult at the best of times because of the sluggishness of the processor and the large amount of memory that has to be manipulated, but the converter — one Dr Aubrey-Jones — has done a marvellous job and I hope we see more of his work in the future.

Full marks to Novagen for a difficult conversion of an excellent game, well done. It also came out on time as well.

For the totally baffled player, Novagen also produce the Targ Survival Kit for £3.95.

MR

SCORELINE

Impact	90%
Originality	70%
Gameplay	80%
X-Factor	85%

OVERALL 82%



Title: Indoor Sports
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Advance
Price: £8.95

Four sports for the price of one make this indoor compilation of air hockey, darts, ping pong and ten pin bowling a must for joystick athletes.

On Air

Air hockey is an unusual game to be computerised but is one of my favourite arcade games and I've spent many an hour smashing my knuckles trying to guide the puck into my opponent's goal. In the actual machine the puck floats on top of a cushion of air that makes it skid at alarming rates around the walled table. This computerised version of the game on the Spectrum is brilliant and features the smoothest gameplay you're ever likely to find.

Bullseye

Darts, however, has never been a computer favourite but this version is probably one of the best. I found the controls a little difficult to master as they involved timing presses, holds and releases of the fire button to aim the dart, select angle of trajectory and power of shot. And, as you let go, the screen display swaps from a close-up of the board to a pub scene.

Your first games will be a complete disaster as dart after dart will miss the board until either the computer wins or you run out of time. Later, with a bit of practice, you'll begin to master the controls and score a few tons and maybe even a maximum 180!

Bowled Over

The maximum score in ten-pin bowling is 300 but this is impossible to get in this version of the game. A bug in the otherwise flawless program robs you of your extra shots if you score a strike or a spare in the tenth frame.

Despite this, this is still the best Spectrum ten-pin bowling game around, it gets straight into the

action without you having to wait for bowling machines to be reset or for scores to be calculated. But again, the controls are tricky to master a miss-timed fire button press can send you careering down the lane with the ball still stuck in your hand!

Two screens capture the excitement as each shot is aimed using a side view of the bowler as he begins his run up and bowls the ball, hopefully without dropping it on his foot. The screen then changes to a close-up of the pins and above them a picture of a facet mimics your expression as the ball smashes the pins for a strike or falls hopelessly into the gutter.

Ping-Pong

Finally, spectrum owners have the added bonus of a fourth event, Ping-Pong — the C64 version only had three games. In this Spectrum version of the C64 game Superstar Ping-Pong ghost-like bats hover over a highly polished table and smash balls at each other. You can take control of one of these bats to play a fast and furious game of table tennis.

The computer keeps score and provides a ruthless opponent, but can help you by automatically moving the bat for you leaving you to concentrate on hitting the ball.

This compilation is programmed by Choice and marketed by Advance and shows all the hallmarks of the duo that brought you the excellent *Hardball* baseball game. The attention to detail is incredible — pens and chalk keep the score in the darts and ten pin-bowling and there is even a reflection of the ball on the ping pong table! **TH**

SCORELINE

Impact	95%
Originality	90%
Gameplay	95%
X-Factor	85%

OVERALL 91%

Title: Gunrunner
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Hewson
Price: £7.95

The planet of Zero was an ice planet in the grip of a never-ending age. The people lived below the planet's surface, drawing their energy from a huge network of plutonium carrying pipes that ran along the planet surface.

Unfortunately, plutonium being what it is, Zero soon became a target for anyone interested in an easy supply of this highly dangerous mineral. The current threat is from the Destrovians, the inhabitants of a neighbouring planet renowned for their warmongering tendencies.

The invasion started slowly. A few teams of saboteurs landed in order to establish a foothold in the outer edges of the piping network. But as they conquered, they built-scanning devices, supply dumps and other defensive measures all went up.

In desperation, the Zeronians sent their meagre forces out to oppose the Destrovians. But to no avail. It seemed a certainty that Zero was to become a doomed planet.

As in all the best game scenarios, there is one last hope: you, the gunrunner. There are ten sections of piping to be traversed and you must do your best to neutralise the Destrovians in each sector by destroying as many of their defences as possible.

Armed initially only with your trusty laser, you will find items lying around that should prove useful later on. These were left behind by other failed would-be heroes. Multi-fire converts your blaster into a tri-directional, rapid fire

weapon. Poison acts as a smart bomb, destroying all the Destrovians on screen at that moment. A shield can help protect you from the falling bombs, although, like poison, it can only be used a limited number of times. Finally, there is a jetpack which allows you to fly over the pipe network, but there is only a limited amount of fuel in it.

As you progress through each level, take every opportunity to shoot the scanner orbs and domes. Take special care with the domes which are likely to be booby trapped. If you collide with one the Destrovians, you are alright if you have operational an shield — you will just lose some of the shield's power. If you *don't* have a shield, the invading force will steal your equipment and if you don't have any equipment...

At the end of each level, there is a bonus screen in which, equipped with laser and jetpack, you must fight your way through to the next level within a given time limit.

Gunrunner has the typical slick Hewson look. It looks very good and handles well, but it just doesn't have that elusive addictiveness about it that can transform a very good game into an excellent one, however. **GRH**

SCORELINE

Impact	85%
Originality	65%
Gameplay	75%
X-Factor	65%

OVERALL 72%



Title: Koronis Rift
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Activision
Price: £7.99

Techno scavenging isn't an easy way of making a living, particularly when you are scavenging in the guardian invested Koronis rift. The rift is packed full of empty hulks, once the space fleet of the ancients. Now they're prey for scavengers like you.

Your mother ship drops your surface rover into the rift, from then on it's up to you. Using your instruments you can track down the hulks and send out a robot to loot the ship. Not all hulks contain loot but some could give you a better laser, shields, generators, a more advanced radar — that will find hulks you'll miss — ECM equipment to make you harder to spot or a new drive to give the rover a better chance of survival in the hazardous rift.

Such devices will be stored in the rover's hold until you return to the mother ship where your analysing robot can assess their worth. This will decide whether you will use them yourself or sell them.

Until you destroy their base, on

level 20, you will continually attacked by the guardians whose ships can rip you apart if you don't blast them first, so you have to plan your tactics so that you can loot the hulks and get back to the mother ship before you come across one guardian too many.

Eventually you will collect enough ancient equipment to prepare your rover for the bombardment of later levels and the battle for the guardian's base. Then, at last, the rift will be yours!

The screen display has banks of instruments and displays and a 3D view of the rift that scrolls ever so smoothly as you trundle around the planet.

The game is a mixture of arcade shoot-em-up and exploration with a helping of strategy.

TH

SCORELINE

Impact	70%
Originality	45%
Gameplay	53%
X-Factor	60%

OVERALL 58%

Title: Krakout
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Gremlin
Price: £7.99

Breakout's back! One of the most original arcade games ever has been re-worked, re-written and re-vamped to produce an incredibly addictive new game — *Krakout*.

Once again in this new game you must use a bat to bounce a ball pong style and hit bricks out of a series walls.

Unfortunately, it isn't that easy as the ball moves considerably faster than your bat so if you're out of position you'll lose a life. To add to your problems the screens are also packed with minions who have been commanded by the awesome ogre to not only deflect the ball past your bat but to sometimes turn into a second ball to distract or to just make a beeline for you and stun you leaving you helpless as you lose yet another life.

The bricks have had a total re-fit too and pose additional original problems in what was a simple game; some bricks need several hits to destroy them; others explode at a single touch; some

even let the ball through but stay intact and others flip over when hit to produce bonus squares that self-destruct in a few seconds — but if you should manage to hit them weird and wonderful things happen to your bat and your chances of completing the screen. Hit the squares before they explode and you could gain an extra life, double the scoring, expand the bat to five times its normal size, slow the ball down, arm yourself with a missile that can wipe out a whole row of bricks, create a shield that stops you from losing the ball or get a second bat. Good, eh!

What can I say, this is a fascinating game that you will come back to time and time again.

TH

SCORELINE

Impact	75%
Originality	85%
Gameplay	95%
X-Factor	85%

OVERALL 85%

Title: Shockway Rider
Computer: C64
Supplier: FTL
Price: £8.95

If you Earthlings have ever wondered what Megacity One would be like without Judge Dredd, here's the answer. *Shockway Rider* is an unashamed celebration of teenage high spirits, not to mention thuggery and straight homicide.

Your aim is to travel the moving walkways of Megacity and survive — which involves a certain amount of pre-emptive aggression on your part. The walkways form a continuous strip and your ultimate ambition is to travel all the way round. The three speed strips of the walkway scroll from left to right. Once on the walkway, the hazards are legion. Innocent-looking, elderly bystanders suddenly turn into vicious killers, for instance. Also there are barriers to get past and flying rocks to dodge. If you fail you may lose your head — literally.

You can, of course, fight back, either with a plain honest bunch of fives, or, if you don't run out of them, smartly lobbed bricks or bottles. The road runs through many city zones, each of which offer a different scheme for gaining bonus lives. In zone one, for example, you need to top five innocent bystanders!

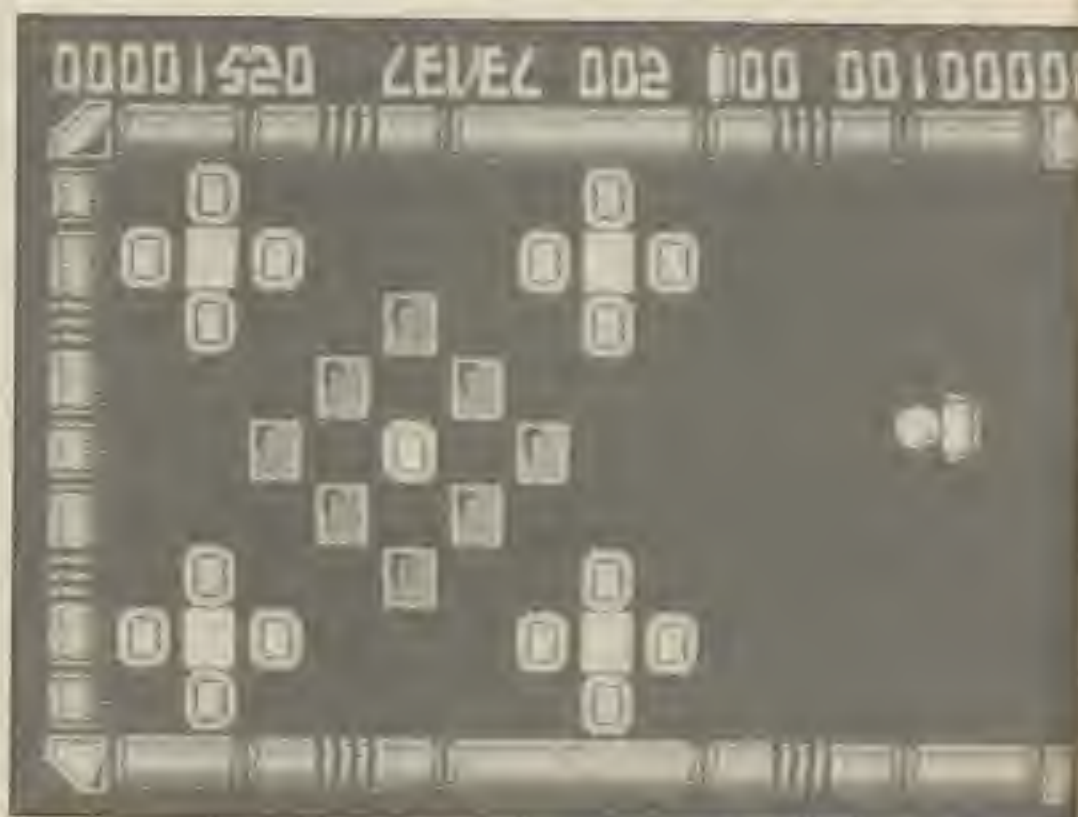
This game certainly keeps you on the hop. The presentation is excellent, particularly the full-screen animation (presumably of the programmer?) But the game didn't thrill me though for some X-Factor reason. Of course it is nasty, socially irresponsible and revels in gratuitous violence. Which is why I wish I liked it more...

FF

SCORELINE

Impact	75%
Originality	65%
Gameplay	65%
X-Factor	35%

OVERALL 65%



Title: The Ket Trilogy
Computer: C64
Supplier: Incentive
Price: £7.95

If you get lost walking from home to the bus stop or can't ever remember where you have left your wallet, the idea of adventure games probably fills you with horrors. All that mapping to be done and having to remember where you left that kipper that you thought was a red herring but now turns out to be of vital importance. No, adventures definitely aren't for you. Well, perhaps it's time you stopped and thought again.

Incentive has re-released their famous *Ket Trilogy* but with one important addition: as you move through the various locations, a map of your progress appears on the screen. An original addition that is also a lot more useful than a few pathetic pictures. Maybe adventures are for you after all!

For anyone who did not catch them the first time round, the story behind the three games is as follows; you have been wrongly condemned for murder and are given a choice — execution or save the world! Wisely, you opt for the latter and, just to make sure that you do not stray from the straight and narrow, an assassin bug called Edgar is implanted in your neck, ready to bite should you even *think* of running away. He also acts as your guide in your quest.

The lands of Ket is under attack on its eastern border. The evil perpetrators are King Vran

Verusbel, leader of the Mad Monks and his sidekick, the priestess, Delphia. In the mountains of Ket, you must locate a secret entrance to the mountains and find a way through them. The Temple of Vran must also be found and destroyed in part two, and in part three, the Final Mission, there is the death or glory encounter with Vran himself. All three games can be played independently so you do not become too frustrated if you can't solve part one.

The games are quite old now and this shows in the parser which looks very dated indeed. The combat system is also fairly rudimentary. As the mapping feature has been specially put in, I was surprised Incentive hadn't taken the opportunity to rewrite the games using their GAC adventure writing system. Having said that, I still prefer these games to their current GAC releases. Well worth investigating if you haven't seen them before; especially recommended for the novice adventurer. **GRH**

SCORELINE

Impact	65%
Originality	60%
Gameplay	60%
X-Factor	65%

OVERALL 63%



The Evil mandarin, Lo Pan, is in search of a body in order to appease a demon. To do this he must marry a green-eyed girl and then sacrifice her. Jack Burton and Wang Chi have girlfriends who both have green eyes so they are kidnapped by Lo Pan's henchmen. Our two heroes set out with a third friend, Egg Shen, to rescue the damsels in distress.

Based on the film of the same name, *Big Trouble in Little China* is little more than a glorious beat-em-up. The difference is that you can switch between the three characters at will, making the most of their various talents. For example, Jack can use a gun — if he find one, Wang Chi, a sword and Egg Shen, a magical bolt.

There are four levels to pass through before the final confrontation with Lo Pan. The Streets of Chinatown level is reasonably easy, but there are monsters to be avoided in the sewers — level two. Level three is Lo Pan's headquarters, complete with elementals, and the final level is the marriage quarters. Armed guards plus Lo Pan — who can regenerate and must be killed by each of the heroes in turn — feature here.

Title: Big Trouble in Little China
Computer: C64
Supplier: Activision
Price: £9.99

Each character only has a limited amount of energy shown by yin-yang symbols, although there is energy restoring food to be found. One thing I didn't like was the fact that you can dodge *under* some of your assailants and indeed, it is often sensible to do so this, if for example, someone has a gun and you don't; but if you choose this manoeuvre, points are deducted from your score. On one occasion, I found myself at the end of level two with nothing to show for my troubles as a result of my dodgery — not exactly a great incentive to play, eh!

Big Trouble in Little China is a better than average beat-em-up and will no doubt appeal

to fans of this type of game, but there is nothing in the game to make you sit up and take notice; especially if you are fed up with the seemingly endless run of martial art games. **GH**

SCORELINE

Impact	70%
Originality	55%
Gameplay	65%
X-Factor	50%

OVERALL 60%

Title: Ranarama
Computer: Amstrad
Supplier: Hewson
Price: £8.95(cass) £14.95(disk)

When this game first came out on the Spectrum I was amazed at how good it was. An original twist on the old *Gauntlet* idea of battling against all odds with a dungeon full nasties.

When this game then came out on the C64 I was horrified. Bad graphics, bad animation, sluggish and the object collisions left a lot to be desired too. Oh well, thought I. Yet another game that didn't convert well.

Now comes 'Ranarama' on the Amstrad. "Look at it carefully", said the Ed. "Remember what a lemon the Commodore version was." As if I didn't look at everything carefully!

Well, I must admit, I was a bit worried in case one of my favourite games hadn't converted across to one of my favourite computers properly. Well, I shouldn't have been so worried. Amstrad *Ranarama* is excellent, so excellent in fact that it is better than the original.

To recap: *Ranarama* is based around the 'plan view' type dungeon game that has sprung up in the wake of *Gauntlet*. *Ranarama* is more complex and better than anything else that has appeared in *Gauntlet's* wake.

The game involves around magic, glyphs and runes. As you move around the dungeon you will find floor glyphs, these act like icons and perform a function when you activate them. Runes are collected when you have entered into ritual combat with the wizards that are also lying about. When you have beaten them, the runes fly off and you have to collect them. These runes may then be exchanged for spells — offensive, defensive, special effect and power.

The spells have various levels — the higher the better. The dungeon itself is massive and multi-leveled. Each level is connected up by transportation glyphs. Another feature of the game is that you cannot see what is in a room until you have actually examined that room — no more seeing through walls!

The Amstrad implementation is excellent. The graphics are sharp and distinct, and the animation smooth and faultless. The game uses the Amstrad's four-colour medium resolution mode and is perfect — good resolution and enough colour to make it interesting. One interesting point here, the nasties consist of more than one colour, this makes them look a lot more real than is usual on Amstrad games of this type. Well done Hewson.

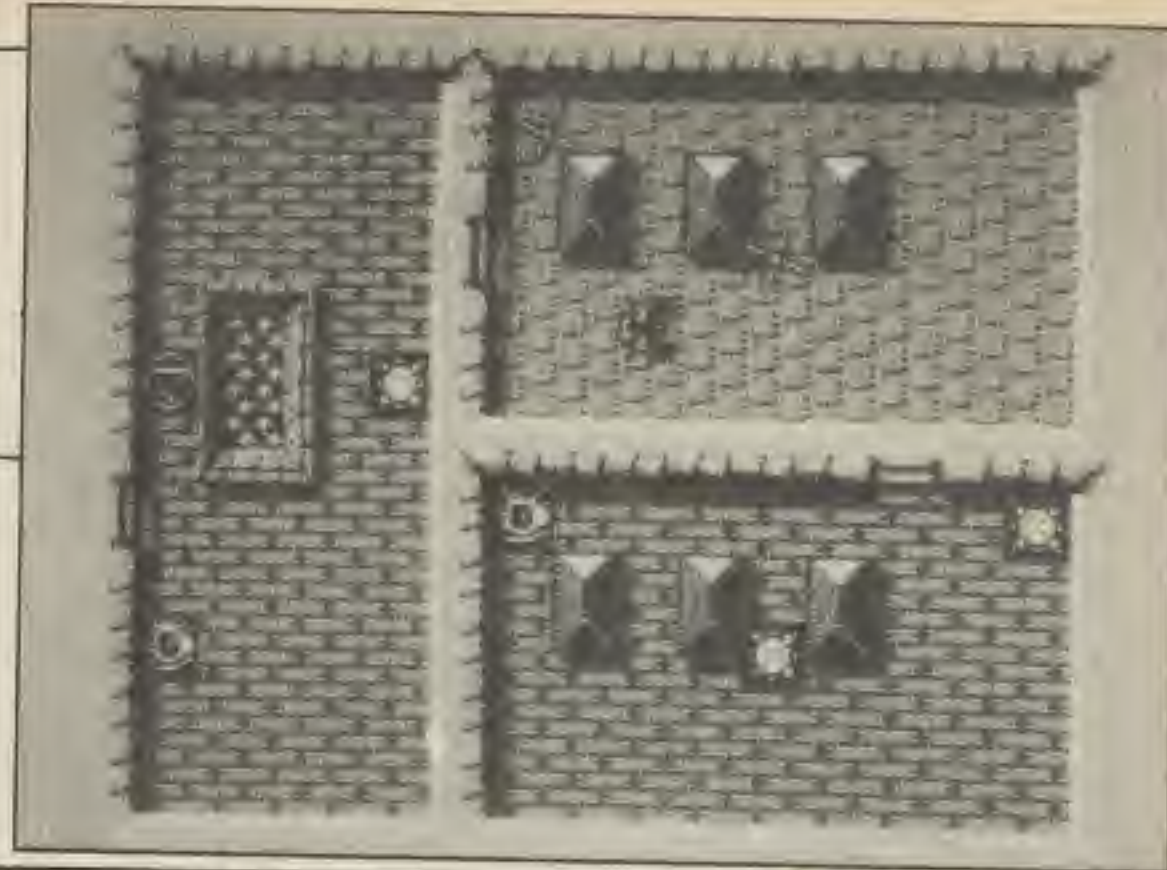
MR

SCORELINE

Impact	90%
Originality	75%
Gameplay	90%
X-Factor	95%

OVERALL

87%



Title: Mutants
Computer: C64
Supplier: Ocean
Price: £8.95

Mutants does not concern the genetically-trashed warpos of popular mythology. No, sir, what we have here are 'macrogenetic mutoids', would you believe, biological weapons that have somehow got out of control and are now a threat to the universe, freedom of the press, Labour Party solidarity etc.

In your faithful craft, the Rainbow Warrior, you must help clear out these sources of interplanetary pollution by travelling into 15 mutoid-dominated zones to retrieve the components of an anti-mutant device. The weapons you have at your disposal include lasers, missiles and barrier blocks, which can be used to keep the muties out or in. The mutants themselves vary from a fine but deadly mist to complex, fast-growing networks. As you move your craft around, the zone you're in smooth-scrolls in two dimensions.

The weapons you choose before undertaking a mission are

important because each zone requires a different strategy. Some mutants can only be blocked, while others can be destroyed, if only temporarily. When you have collected one or more device pieces, you can deposit them at the sixteenth zone to get extra lives. Once all 16 pieces have been dropped off, you may proceed to the next frame.

Mutants shows the usual Ocean flair. Gameplay is finely-tuned and the game is visually very pleasing. Some strategic thinking is needed, too, but above all I felt I was getting better at the game as I gained experience. That's a factor that always gets the punters hooked. An intelligent shoot-em-up.

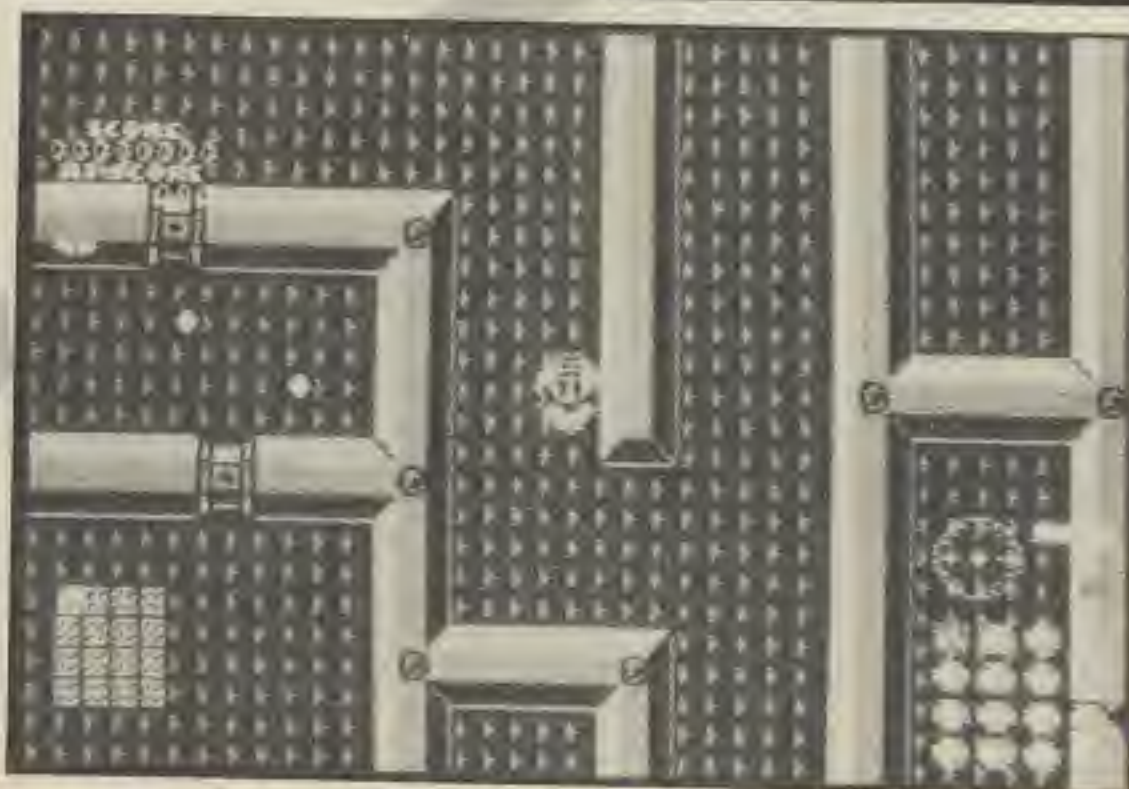
FF

SCORELINE

Impact	75%
Originality	70%
Gameplay	80%
X-Factor	55%

OVERALL

70%



Title: Vulcan
Computer: Amstrad
Supplier: CCS
Price: £9.95

No, it's not Star Trek on the Amstrad at last, but the final operation of the African campaign in World War Two called Vulcan.

The prolific and knowledgeable R. T. Smith has, yet again, come up with a war game of incredible accuracy, which is also clear and easy to play.

A previous game by the same author, *The Desert Rats*, detailed the start of the conflict between Montgomery and Rommel. *Vulcan* is the final showdown and involves the destruction of the Afrika Korps and the taking of Tunis.

The game has the usual

instruction book with 32 pages — half of them given over to the historical background with pictures to the operation. This kind of detail helps you to understand the why, which is as important as the how.

The how instructions are very clear and easy to understand — after the required three readings, and all the reference tables and lists are easy to find.

The game is on a fairly large scale and uses a scrolling map of north Africa, rather than waste memory with a larger scale all at once map. A big map is provided

in the form of a massive screen dump in the centre pages of the manual.

Units are represented by carefully chosen symbols with greater information on specific units being displayed elsewhere on the screen.

Graphics are in the Amstrad's 16 colour-low-resolution mode. But, as the map is so finely detailed, nothing is lost by this and the full use of colour increases clarity.

A number of options are provided including five scenarios of different sections of the campaign ranging from short attacks, that last 25-45 minutes, to the whole biz, that could last up to 16 hours.

The computer will play either side or two players can play instead. The computer plays a

reasonably strong game as the Allies and battles valiantly as the Axis side. But the odds always seem weighted in favour of the side which actually won the individual conflicts. Playing the two player mode allows more freedom for mistakes and to pull off surprise attacks.

On the whole this is an excellent game and an example to all programmers of strategy games as to how a game like this should be presented.

MR

SCORELINE

Impact	85%
Originality	75%
Gameplay	85%
X-Factor	85%

OVERALL 83%



Title: Scalextric
Computer: Amstrad
Supplier: Leisure Genius
Price: £9.95

Leisure Genius produces reasonable games based on well known non-computer games. The latest for the Amstrad, is based on Scalextric.

The original game pitted two or four cars against each other on a race circuit that you could build yourself from sections of track. These sections came in various lengths, bends and straights.

The computer version of this game is a combination of *Pitstop 2* and *Racing Destruction Set*, the track designer. The game includes all the sections of track you would expect as well as a few chicanes. There are also 17 pre-defined tracks — the ones used in the Formula One Grand Prix series. But using a pre-defined track can be very laborious as you must cycle

through each track in turn. If you want to race on Brands Hatch, for instance — probably the most popular circuit — you have to watch 16 other tracks being drawn slowly on the screen before you first. As each track takes a few seconds to draw the wait is just about as irritating as it could possibly be. And if you choose another track after a race, you have to go through the whole rigmarole again if you want a different one as you always start with the first one.

The tracks are also extremely inaccurate — most of them go around the wrong way! F1 circuits, indeed nearly all circuits, are driven around in a clockwise manner, with the first bend being on the right. This is why pole position is at the

front on the right. There is also no provision for changing pole position, car one gets it all the time — it would be car two, but the circuits are backwards!

And, when the start straight is positioned, the cars will always drive off to the right if it is a horizontal straight. Think back to the last time you saw the start of an F1 race on TV. Right to left, wasn't it.

The designer is the same as any other designer of this type; a blank piece of screen; icons representing the different track sections and a joystick moved cursor to pick them up and put them down. The main problem here is that the save track option doesn't work with the remote lead of the tape deck connected, so if you've got a 464 hard luck! The reason for this is because the save routine is a turbo save and does not write out a lead tone, so the write head of the deck starts writing before the erase head can clear that section of tape.

The game itself also has a few serious flaws, the most serious being that it is so unrealistic it is a complete joke. You don't expect that much accuracy with a game like this but in this one you can beat the hardest computer opponent without ever using the brake! When you hit a bend you just skid until your speed drops to that permissible for that section of track and carry on. It is also extremely difficult to overtake as the track is not very wide — whoever starts first wins the race.

This could have been a very good game. The program is actually well written and looks good too. The only problem is that it looks like it was written by someone who had never seen a car before!

MR

SCORELINE

Impact	80%
Originality	45%
Gameplay	60%
X-Factor	30%

OVERALL 54%



Title: Throne of Fire
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Melbourne House
Price: £7.95

The king is dead. The Throne of Fire in the burning citadel stands empty and a power struggle as to who will occupy it is in operation.

The three contenders for the throne are the king's sons. The eldest, Alorn, is strong but stupid; Cordrin is fair and just, while the youngest, Karag, is devious and underhand. Each prince has a band of loyal supporters and there is also the palace guard throwing its weight around as it sees fit.

You can play any one of the princes with the computer taking control of the other two. Alternatively, a friend can take the part of a second prince.

The screen is divided into two — one half for you and one for your opponent. At the bottom of the display is a scrolling map of the citadel. Occupied rooms are shown as a coloured window, the colour representing a particular player. Flickering lights indicate combat. Above that is a close up of the room occupied by the person currently under your control. Although you command several men, you can only deal with them one at a time.

The game involves moving your men around the castle, protecting your prince and defeating the opposing forces. There are one or two little extras like reinforcements and potions. If you can make your way to the throne room unopposed, you can be crowned and take control of the king's guard, but you still have to defeat the others. Combat depends on your strength as shown by a throbbing heart. There are no set moves — eg joystick up = high thrust — rather it is how you move the joystick that counts, ie moving from joystick up to joystick left might trigger a thrusting movement.

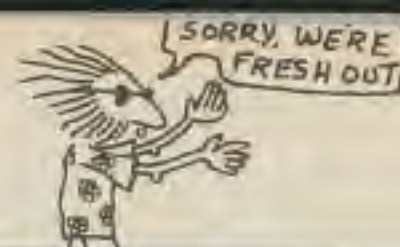
There are some interesting ideas in Throne of Fire, but they don't gel particularly well. On screen action is confusing and the game itself, quite frankly, is tedious. **GH**

SCORELINE

Impact	50%
Originality	80%
Gameplay	45%
X-Factor	40%

OVERALL

54%



Title: Who Dares Wins II
Computer: C16
Supplier: Tynesoft
Price: £7.95

Alligata's C64 version of this game was a great success and was about the best of the *Commando* clones. This C16 version was shown off at the Commodore show in November of last year. But if for some reason you don't know what it's all about here's a quick rundown.

Armed with an automatic weapon and five grenades, you must charge up the screen shooting the enemy and blowing up their vehicles. There are trees, swamps, trucks, trains, mounds and ditches in your way, but you must charge on regardless undeterred by the havoc all around you until you reach a garrison. From this garrison will come a whole battalion of baddies who must be annihilated. After that, having rescued the captives, you must go in search of the next outpost. And on and on until eventually your three lives are lost.

Okay, details: there are boxes of grenades be picked up and there are eight sectors, each about eight screens long. The game doesn't scroll or flip screen, so when you lose a life you start on the screen you were on. This means that there are about 64 screens of tough action, not bad for 16K. Next thing — the layouts don't change, so find a way that works and use it every time. The men move randomly, but the trenches they hide in and the mounds they hide behind don't. Also, learn which is the correct path across the rivers and when the trucks and trains come so you're ready with

a grenade for them. There's a keyboard or joystick option, with space bar for grenades — this is an improvement over the 64 version which had an awkward method of grenade control.

The game is tediously slow but you get used to it and keep coming back and the sound FX are quite good. Graphics are pretty nice too — the sprites animate fairly well and are multi-coloured with hardly any colour clash and no aura around them. The background objects are pretty colourful as well; the trees look like trees and you actually feel as though you are walking across the river. The game, however, has two main faults; general slowness coupled with the slowness of response of the joystick, which makes it difficult to avoid the bullets. Another fault is comes the title screen. After every game *Colonel Bogey* plays all the way through before you can start a new game again. The tune is very nice, but it does put you off a bit if you have to wait before every game.

But the programmer has tried hard and the game is good — playable, addictive and interesting, but it's not quite as good as Anco's *Legionnaire*, however. **RPN**

SCORELINE

Impact	77%
Originality	36%
Gameplay	79%
X-Factor	81%

OVERALL

71%

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THE WEEK

Activision is under new management in the UK. How will this affect future hopes?

I wonder where Activision would be today if Rod Cousens hadn't nailed the Electric Dreams company's standard to floundering Activision's mast. Originally, Southampton-based Electric Dreams used Activision as a Stateside distributor but gradually the vast marketing knowledge of Managing Director Cousens attracted the attention of the Americans and now it's difficult to see where Activision ends and Electric Dreams begins!

two I must say that I preferred Eyles' Aliens but this is probably influenced by nationalistic fervour and the fact that I still owe Mark a quid for the film I used to shoot the screenshots!

Sounds very Montmatre

Software Studios is the product development arm for all of the labels published by Activision. The Studio is conceived as an



Activision man: Rod Cousens



Wonderboy

Activision also encompasses Infocom with their brilliant adventure output, Gamestar's sport simulations and has distribution arrangements with Sierra On Line and System 3 (the maker of International Karate).

Rod's own team has strength and talent on its side in the form of Mark Eyles and Software Studios, with street cred provided by Andrew Wright.

Mark is Rod's right hand man as well as being a game designer of no small talent. Mark's most recent project resulted in the production of Aliens, the game of the film. Unfortunately, there appears to have been some confusion between the UK and the US arms of Activision over this particular license resulting in two very different versions of Aliens appearing at the same time. Of the

exclusive club where membership is earned through excellence. Through Software Studios, Activision will review ideas, screen program submissions and oversee projects from conception to marketing. In return, the elite members will be given an informal hi-tech environment where programmers, authors, musicians and artists can meet. Whether this will result in the appearance of wine bars and umbrella-shaded tables where hi-brow intellectuals take a breather from their garretted existences remains to be seen. It all sounds very Montmatre to me but such an approach could provide an atmosphere in which innovation thrives.

To me, Andrew Wright and his 'Tin-Tin' hairstyle represents the new face of Activision. His persona smacks of designer labels and style magazines, and his brief but painful time with Thalamus taught him the skills needed in today's software market.



Aliens

CHOCO



Software Studios: (l to r) Dave Cummins, Jon Dean, Simon Tons, Peter Sleeman, Alan Drew

Andrew is in charge of PR, aided and abetted by Clare Hirsch, Activision's attractive, smart and secret weapon at press lunches. Together they give Activision's public face a fresh, trendy image backed up by a sharp awareness of marketing techniques.

Failing Fortunes

Games like Pitfall, Decathlon, Ghostbusters and Ballblazer marked the heyday of the Activision Empire. Then came 1986, a year of failing fortunes which sounded the death knell for the old regime. Co-incidentally, the official Activision stationery has a border based on the black and white flag waved at the end of a Grand Prix which also reflects the chequered history of the company's fortunes in the British software market. The New Year bells rang out the old and brought the new in a very real sense in 1987. Over the first few months the company which Greg Fischbach spawned over here has gradually been transformed and revitalised.

The flow of games promises to turn into a veritable flood with license after license being snapped up for conversion as well as backing to the new self-originated games from Software Studios. Already we are seeing the fruits of the new crop with Enduro Racer at the top of the free riding high in the charts. Close on its heels we anticipate the official version of Wonderboy, Quartet, UFO Robo Dangan, Firetrap, Rampage and Supersprint. As you can see, this encompasses many of the big arcade manufacturers. Activision UK are not interested in tying themselves down to one manufacturer but base all of their contracts on the quality of the original game.

Of this group, Wonderboy and Quartet are ready for launch and both look like fine conversions in the Enduro Racer mould. If you want to be one up on your mates you can nip down to the local arcade and get the feel of the game before you buy.

Already in the shops

At the moment Big Trouble in Little China, Star Raiders II, Sailing and Firetrack

are a few of the games already in the shops. Of these, only Sailing is truly original (see Games May issue) and Big Trouble is reviewed elsewhere in this issue, while Star Raiders II is given the once over in our Seconds Out feature.

This leaves Firetrack (Electric Dreams) which is a derivative of the Terra Cresta style of game where you have to run the gauntlet of waves of alien attack forces while taking



out the ground bases installed on a scrolling landscape. The gameplay makes it an excellent shoot-em-up, though it really has nothing to recommend it over the plethora of similar games in a saturated market. Its one unique feature is that it was originally programmed for the BBC micro by the legendary Orlando. It's not often that a BBC is used as a springboard for conversions.

In their attempt to maintain an overall appeal, Activision are not ignoring the less numerous but growing band of wargame enthusiasts. Amstraders will soon be up to their ears in muck and bullets in the Guadalcanal campaign which was a strategic step on the road to Japan's defeat by the Americans during the Second World War. The campaign lasted from August 1942 to February 1943, after a long and bloody battle.

Depending on which side you take as your own, the battle is for control of the island using ground forces, air attack and includes the crucial battle for naval supremacy which was the decisive factor in a battle far from both countries' home bases. To assist your strategic skills all of the commands are issued via an ingenious system of nested icon menus. Weather conditions affect the battle in a realistic simulation and one notable feature is the ability to speed up the passage of time allowing you to skip through the boring bits while units are moving into position.

Starwars technology

This game is accompanied by the development of a strategy simulation based on modern SDI (Starwars) technology. High Frontier may sound like an old Western movie but the only cowboy here is Ronald Reagan. Diplomacy and underhanded spying techniques all come to play as you try to raise capital from the Capitol to fund an attempt to gain aerial supremacy over the commies or the imperialists, depending on your political leanings.

The latest Software Studios project to receive attention is September, a disarmingly simple boardgame concept from Paradigm Games. Danny Kishon, the game's designer, has sold the computer rights to Activision but I'm assured that the computer version will be no simple transfer from board to screen.

The principle of the game is to use a variety of shapes to form a line connecting two opposite edges of the playing board. Meanwhile your opponent is trying to connect the other two sides in a similar way. Frustrating your opponent's efforts while modifying your own strategy is the secret of success in a game that can last for hours and sees each player alternating between attack and defence as the game develops.

Software Studios concept will take this basic idea, blow the board up to a scrolling multiscreen size and probably introduce nasty little alien forces to work against both players' fortunes. Having taken on Mark Eyles and Andrew Wright at the boardgame, I look forward to competing against them on the computer. Modesty (and threats from Mark and Andrew) forbids me from naming the tournament champion.



High Frontier



American Football

Become the top dog

Even PCW users get a look in on the new deal. The background software company, Ram Jam, who produced Dandy for Electric Dreams have written an adventure based in gangland Chicago as ruled by Al Capone. The aim is simple: become the top dog. The reality is more complex!

On the Gamestar front, the output gets better and better though with a distinct American bias. Starting with an updated version of Baseball which has superb large-sprite animation on the C64, these

techniques have been followed through to create the ultimate American Football simulation. For the first time the company which started the Football simulation ball rolling has forsaken the overworked stickman graphics which has become a hallmark of this genre. Now you are placed on the field of play with big, meaty, he-men opposing your every move. The range of plays open to you as the captain and star player must be the widest choices ever offered to an armchair sportsman and all of the strategies are shown in brilliant 3D animation guaranteed to blow your mind.

For my money, this is the best and most original simulation that I have seen for a long time and I can't wait to get my hands on a copy to try it out at home.

The good news from Infocom is that Douglas Adams has masterminded a follow-up to his phenomenally successful Hitchhiker's Guide, based on his bitter experiences which a change of address brought.

Bureaucracy marks his revenge. Bureaucracy exists so that paranoia can become a thing of the past. If you feel that someone's out to get you, the bureaucrats will prove you right, if you're right you can't be paranoid! In preparation for your real life experiences of red tape you could do worse than to take on the tangled, red web of Adams' new world.

A new venture in the adventure field involves the signing of Fergus MacNeil's Abstract Concepts to a licensed label deal. Fergus built his reputation with the excellent Delta 4 Software team through Tolkienesque parodies Bored of the Rings and The Boggit. The first release will not be seen until September's PCW Show but Rod Cousens has long admired Fergus' work and describes the deal as "representing an exciting association for the future."

Last Ninja

System 3 are not known for their prolific output but with International Karate, their attitude changed to one of quality not quantity. It looks as though the Last Ninja will fulfil everyone's high expectations of a worthy martial arts follow-up unlike the disappointment of Melbourne House's similar venture with Fist II.

At present all I have is a rolling demo on which to base my opinions but what I've seen impresses me tremendously. Superb animation and quickly drawn, detailed and colourful backdrops refreshes the parts its peers cannot reach. If the fighting and problem solving is only half as good as the appearance of the game then it will be my martial arts game of 1987.

Rod Cousens is a man with a reputation to protect, he is proud of his past achievements and hopes to prove his worth now that he's tied his future to Activision's name. So far I'm convinced that he's pulling out all the stops to regain the audience that Activision has lost, but only time will tell if his new instrument is capable of playing a different tune. So far I like the fanfare and overture and eagerly await the symphony later this year.



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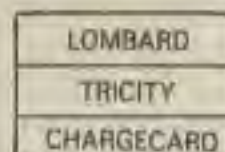
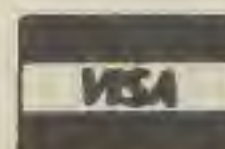
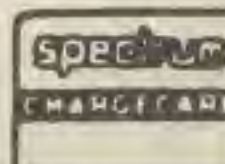


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AEs

The first thing that strikes you about this game is its really stupid name. It is actually pronounced "ay-us" and it will be a hindrance, I am sure, to its success. However despite this drawback it is probably the fastest growing fantasy game in the UK so it must have something going for it.

At the PBM convention, Legend walked off with two prizes for the game. The first was for the best new game — quite an achievement when you consider that the opposition included *It's a Crime*. Perhaps the reason for the game's success is explained by the second award, where John Todé was voted best game master, and his partner, Bob Moss, also came high up in the voting. Essentially AEs is no better than dozens of other fantasy games but it scores very highly for the imagination and inventiveness of the GMs.

You start the game by creating a character and here there are quite a lot of to think about. Obviously you must state size, hair colouring, etc, but you must also choose race (elf, dwarf, halfling, orc and various half breeds, each with its own particular strengths and weaknesses) and alignment (good, evil, neutral, etc), and you have to provide a history for your character.

There are 17 character classes to choose from. Your alignment will to some extent dictate your choice but you can be anything from a fighter or assassin to a paladin. You can also select a god to worship (there are no less than 60) and some basic skills to help you.

Having equipped yourself with the necessary equipment you are ready to venture forward. If all this sounds a bit like Dungeons and Dragons then you are not far wrong. The good thing about the starting process is the number of options which are numerous and extensive.

The adventures themselves are difficult to describe for all are different. You are let loose in a strange world where strange creatures abound and magic is commonplace. On your first round you will receive information that can lead you in certain directions, but you must decide which to follow up and how to act in any situation.

Of course there are several hundred other players around so you can join in with their campaigns or try to throw a spanner into the works. The GMs are very good but as in all fantasy games the more you put in the more you are likely to get out of it.

Progression in the game is by experience points so the players who achieve most become powerful, unlike some other games where you can rise in power by doing nothing. Every couple of months there is a newsletter which contains news, rule additions, obituaries, notoriety tables, histories of the world and lots of other info.

This was the first game where you can decide the how much detail the GM sends you. There are three types of round, ranging from basic to full narrative, each at a different cost. This reflects the amount of time that the GM has to put in and is, in my opinion,

What is PBM?

Play-by-mail gaming is a relatively new phenomenon in Britain and has grown rapidly over the last three years, though it has been thriving in the USA for many years. Instead of playing games face-to-face with a few friends, you can join in with hundreds or even thousands of other players. Professional game masters (GMs) act as referees, often with computer assistance and you pay them to do this with a charge for each turn that you send in. Costs vary from 50p to £14 per round and the average cost is about £1.50; turn-around times vary from a few days to a month.

There are many different types of game; you can manage a soccer, cricket or American football team, lead a gang in futuristic New York or post-holocaust London, dabble in the stock exchange, try to escape from a POW camp or lead an army in the Napoleonic wars. In Britain the two

most popular types of game are fantasy, where you usually take the part of a character or group leader in a land of swords and sorcery, and sci-fi, where typically you would command a spaceship involved in stellar exploration and space combat.

One of the best features of PBM is the diplomacy. You can contact many other players to organise alliances, plan battles, discuss tactics or just talk about postal gaming or other subjects. Opportunities to scheme and cheat your enemies are almost endless, but only in the games! Outside the games, PBMers like nothing better than to meet and have a good time.

If you are hearing about PBM for the first time or are interested, if you send me a large stamped addressed envelope at the Gamer office, you will receive a copy of the booklet *A Guide to PBM Gaming* which will tell you everything you need to know. Of course reading PBM Update every month will also keep you up to date with all the new developments.



PBM UPDATE

Legend's AEs fantasy epic comes under scrutiny, and we look at Gamer's own *Kings of Steel*, but first a little news. All by Mike McGarry.

a good idea. The cost does not effect what happens but you pay for extra atmosphere.

To sum up, AEs is a good game run in a very professional and imaginative way. It would appeal to anyone who enjoys fantasy and possesses a good imagination himself. It is the 'in' game at the moment and looks to be heading for even greater success. Costs are reasonable with start-up at £6 and rounds costing between £1.50 and £2. The GMs are likeable and approachable and are usually to be found at most PBM meets sitting in the corner discussing the game with their players. Almost the first thing that players say to be these days is "Do you play AEs?" and that must be a recommendation in itself.

Hints and ...

Here are some hints and tips for some games — but we won't spoil it by giving too much away.

Earthwood: put a dragon in a city and another will be produced.

Kings of Steel: never assume that because a neutral has not moved that it is not controlled.

Saturnalia: if you meet a character and his surname is Beanbag distrust him.

Earthwood: don't neglect the edges of the map. There are many NPFs to be found there.

Explorers of Orion: before fighting make sure that you have Gylite armour, this gives you +2 for each man in battle.

It's A Crime: it's easy to forget the act tough order but this is the easiest way to gain morale.

Kings of Steel

Round two of the special **Gamer Kings of Steel** saw great territorial gains by some players while others had their work cut out to protect their homelands from marauding enemy forces. The druids have had it easy so far, spreading south from their North-west power base and taking land after land. Similarly in the North-east, the Attu forces have been unhindered in their conquest while neighbouring warlock and elven armies are busy clashing at several points. Most interesting is the position in the South-west where the Kir, the woodlanders and the Loyalists fight for domination while the Sect look on ready to pick up the pieces.

Many other so-called neutrals are on the move. For the first time in centuries the black wrym of Felgarl is seen abroad and the Hydra has been seen in Serto. Black legions are marching in all directions and the lost dwarves have been found! At Eclat an army of trolls attacked the plainsmen in their own homeland. Trolls do not have the sense to retreat and the defenders were determined to fight to the last man. At length the battle field was covered with the dead of both sides. Finally the trolls were triumphant and the few remaining plainsmen scattered. It is not known whose hand was guiding the trolls but the hillmen leaders seem to be in good spirits.

In other battles, another plainsmen army has taken a battering at the hands of the Klasshi, the warlock has taken a hammering by the elves at Orlia and a dwarven army attempting to take control of East City were thwarted by a black legion rumoured to be in the pay of the elves.

Congratulations to N P Breakell of Preston whose druids take over the number one spot.

The top six, along with their scores, are:

1. **The Druids** (N P Breakell, Preston) 180;
2. **The Attu** (David Wong, Glasgow) 157;
3. **Woodlanders** (Lars Andersson, Sweden) 97;
4. **The Orcs** (Orjan Nordhus, Norway) 93;
5. **The Dwarves** (John Cochrane, Edinburgh) 93;
6. **The Klasshi** (Karelm Rekers, Holland) 92.

Anyone interested in joining a new *Kings of Steel* game just about to start should contact Sloth Enterprises in Southampton. Start-up is £4 to **Gamer** readers and includes map, rulebook, individual material and the first three rounds.

New Games

I thought for a while that this would be the first month ever when I would not have a new game to have a look at, until a large brown envelope popped through my door and I was face-to-face with yet another soccer game; this one is called *Kick About*.

PBM, like any other area of human endeavour, has fashions and sport simulations seem to be the flavour of the month. Most of them offer pretty good value and this is no exception. It costs £5 to start up and this includes the first ten games, and after that each game costs 50p. You get to pick a team each week to play in a division of ten and all the usual elements, transfers, injuries, cups, etc, are included.

I must say that *Kick About* looks like a good one. The reports and league tables are well-produced and there is a nice line in humour running through the game. One good feature is that there are cash prizes for players whose teams win leagues and cups so if you are good enough it can pay you to play.

Phil Shulkind, who runs the game, is a **Gamer** reader and a regular Update correspondent so he deserves all the encouragement we can give him. So lets all go out and join up and perhaps we can think up some sillier names than the current crop which include Brewers Droop, Gotham City Wanderers and Arsenal (that last one is really dumb).

No other new games but I hear from readers in Norway that the scene over there is getting pretty big. The only game I know anything about is *Ringe* (The Ring), a fantasy game from Elbereth. If there are other games about I would be glad to hear about them. We have a large readership in Norway and they are sure to be interested. Please note that my knowledge of Norwegian is limited so please write in English!

KJC have finally released the boss rules for *It's a Crime*. If you are the strongest gang in your sector and you exceed certain minimum requirements you become a mob boss and enter a new phase of the game. I have not yet seen the new rule book itself, so more details will have to wait until next month. Most of us were a bit sceptical that these new rules actually existed so my apologies to KJC for ever doubting them.

There has been a rumour going about that a 'major gaming company' has been looking at PBM with the idea of moving in in a big way. Any readers that are interesting in fantasy role playing might have an inkling as to who they are. The rumours are now getting very strong though they are still as far as I know unconfirmed. I will report any developments from this front in the next few months. I feel sure that PBM is strong enough to resist any attempt by any company to create the type of monopoly that exists in the FRP world.

Any readers in the London area who are 18 or over might be interested in the monthly PBM pub-meet, held on the first Friday of each month at the Crown pub in Brewer Street W1. Here you can meet over a hundred PBMs as well as a scattering of GMs from *Sloth*, *Pangea*, *Mitre* and *The Laboratory*. Lots of info is swapped and plenty of ale is supped.



Address List

Sloth Enterprises, PO Box 82, Southampton SO9 7FG.

Legend Inc, 38 Overton Drive, Chadwell Heath, Essex RM6 4EA.

Phil Shulkind, 58 Hampstead Rd, Dorking, Surrey RH4 3AH.

KJC Games, PO Box 11, Cleveleys, Blackpool, Lancs FY5 2UL.

Elbereth, Postboks 2530, 8061 Lopsmark, Norway.

Thalamus strike again with a smart looking Nemesis clone.



Delta is Stavros Fasoulas' follow up to *Sanxion* and is Thalamus' second release. I didn't rate *Sanxion* as I felt that it was just another attempt to cash in on Braybrook's *Uridium*. I felt the music was over-rated — not a patch on *Monty on the Run*, *Thing* or *International Karate*, though *Sanxion* did have one redeeming feature, its velocity controlled parallax scrolling but that doesn't feature in this game.

In *Delta* you must make your way through 32 scrolling levels, each about four screens long. To help you, there are weapons you can buy to aid you in your task, but the trick is being able to buy them. To obtain one credit you must annihilate one astro wave. That's the problem — the waves aren't random, they are pre-defined, as in *Sanxion*, which makes the game tedious and boring. This means the game goes the same way as *Thing on Spring* or *Manic Miner* — you have to work out what to do and repeat it each go. If you miss just one alien in a wave, you don't get a credit and you can't buy the right weapon, so you can't destroy the next wave, so you can't buy another weapon... It sets off a chain reaction and, of course, if you haven't got enough speed, you may die. Missing just one alien can spell doom. Not nice if you are on the 31st level!

There are seven weapons you can buy. Extra speed — one credit, can be increased to a maximum of four (you start with one) after which the engine blows and you go back to one. Extra bullets — two credits,

you start by only firing one bullet at a time, but with each extra one you buy it increases to a maximum of three. Multiple fire — three credits, this simple device means that whenever you press fire you fire a bullet up, down and backwards as well. Fish weapon — four credits, very neat device this, it flanks your first forward bullet of every round (ie not every bullet if you've got three) with another, so in effect you fire a trident.

Protector — five credits, a yellow ball circling your ship wiping out anything it hits, you're still vulnerable though. Warper — six credits, slows the scrolling speed down. Supa Shield — seven credits, a permanent protector against the enemy, obliterates everything.

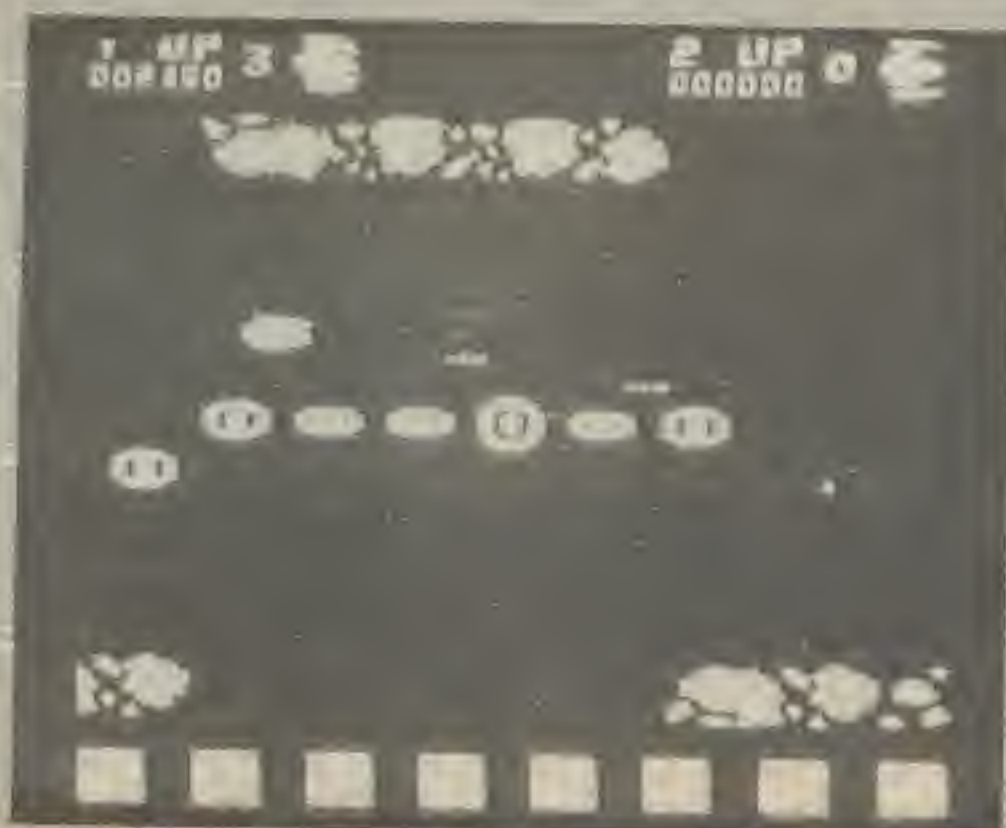
Some points to note; the speed

controls how fast you move up, down, left, right, not the scrolling. Second point, to get the weapons a wave of icons will scroll past every so often (pre-determined) and the ones you can afford will be highlighted in blue; the others, in grey, cause death on impact. This leads me to my final gripe — if you have max speed, your joystick becomes more sensitive so creating difficulties in getting through these waves. But if you die you must go through them again, so it is possible to lose all your lives of because a programming mistake. Also, even if you don't buy anything, or don't spend all your credits, you lose any remaining ones, so you can't save up for a Supa Shield.

Title: Delta
Computer: Commodore 64
Supplier: Thalamus
Price: £9.95 (cass); £14.95 (disk)

Whilst loading, there is an innovative 'Mix-e-Music' by Rob Hubbard — you can change the four voices individually, but I found it interfered with the loading although the tune itself is pretty good. The title screen music is excellent, pure Rob Hubbard. You can't do Prokofiev on a chip so there's no point in trying. However, the in-game music is very poor for some reason, but it gets better the farther you get — the only incentive I had to continue playing! But the FX are excellent. Graphically the game is unsurpassable.

The character set and sprites are wonderful, your ship spins as you play, and the way some of the aliens animate, twisting in and out of themselves like eels, is marvellous. The backgrounds too are excellent, but a lot happens in open space. The game looks and feels like a coin-op and would not look out of place in an arcade, but it is unplayable. I don't want to play a game where one minor error finishes you off.



SCORELINE

Impact	99%
Originality	98%
Gameplay	73%
X-Factor	18%
OVERALL	71%

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Rory Newman is a Commodore fan who usually sneers at Spectrum games. Until now!

Title: Enduro Racer
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Activision
Price: £9.99



We lined up. Five of us waiting for the start, all confident of victory. Several others had gone before us and now it was our turn. The five men in the latest time-heat mounted on five dirt bikes, each man covered from head to foot in protective clothing: helmets, pads and gloves already on. We sat, waiting. I was in the centre, the best place to be. 3... 2... 1... Go!



The five bikes were kicked into action simultaneously. Five bikes accelerating manfully. 30... 35... 40... 45 kilometres per hour. I'd had a good start. I was already in second position and felt the power of my finely tuned bike flow through me.

The rider immediately on my left had taken an early lead, but I was now faster, catching up. He seemed

to grow bigger as I slowly drew closer. 90... 95... 100, and still accelerating. His bike was slow. Mine was fast. He became bigger and then disappeared from view behind me. I was in the lead. In front of me only the road, the tarmac edged with deciduous trees which whizzed past me. I saw a bump coming up and kept accelerating. 140... 145. I was doing 150 kilometres per hour and as I dropped down over the bump my stomach churned. Then I saw my first jump coming up. I pulled a wheelie and took off high into the air. Holding the wheelie, I covered the rocks below and held the wheel up as I hit the ground, sinking down slightly as the impact was dampened by the shock absorbers. Another bend, but I was too far over. I slammed on the brakes and leant as far over as I could. My right foot scraped the floor, as I pulled the bike across safely. I pushed harder on the throttle, and was almost doing 200. The top limit. My tyres were gripping well.

Two more bikes from the earlier race came into view. The road was now lined with firs. I leant a touch first left and then right to weave my way through them. No need for extravagant gestures, just a slight tilt took me sailing through. Flushed with confidence, I saw the next jump too late. I didn't have time to go into a wheelie, and as I hit it full on my speed slackened and I was thrown upwards. I just managed to hang onto the handlebars, as I was thrown into a hand stand. I fell back into my seat and pulled myself together. I'd survived.

A few more bikes, a few more corners, as the mountainous background scrolled from side to side. Another jump. I saw it in time and pulled another wheelie. Up into the air, soaring like a bird above the ground below. As I came down I forgot to pull back and landed on two wheels. Again I was thrown into the air, only staying on by

holding onto the bars tightly. Again I was in a hand stand, again I came down safely. Another corner, a few more bikes, a couple more bumps and I'd completed level one safely. And then, as if by magic, the landscape changed. The desert. Sand clouds on the horizon, jagged rocks lining the road, with the occasional stark tree.

As I drove on, clouds of dust billowed from the back tyre. A jeep came up behind me, and I swerved violently out of the way. But now I was wide, too wide. A sharp corner came and I tried to move in or at least keep my 'guard in the middle, but I was going too fast and my wheels weren't gripping the dusty surface. I slid across into a rock, hit it and my bike went flying high into the air leaving me lying on the ground.

Seconds later I was back in the race and something happened. This time I hit the brakes. I still went wide, but I was slower and slipped through a gap between the rocks unscathed. I gradually got going again and weaved back through the rocks, returning to the dusty track. I started to accelerate again, over and down across another bump. I was gaining speed again. A jump approached, I wheeled, but I was too slow. Again I was thrown into the air but I came down too soon, landing on a rock.

After I'd recovered, I remounted and weaved my way through more rocks back onto the road and then the bell rang... I was at home playing Enduro Racer. It was Saturday night. If it was any more realistic I'd need insurance!

Sega's Enduro Racer was acclaimed throughout the coin-op world as an excellent sequel to its highly successful predecessor *Hang On*. Activision have for some time needed a hit and I'm sure it will come in the form of this coin-op conversion. I can safely say that this is the most realistic conversion available.



w!



If by now you haven't guessed or don't already know what Enduro Racer involves, it is a bike racing game. You must race through five stages, each with a different landscape. You have a time limit for each stage and, if you complete a stage within that time, your remaining time is carried forward. The games end when your time runs out, whereupon it will tell you what percentage of the current stage you have completed. All the stages have different surfaces and therefore your bike reacts accordingly. As I have said, the sand doesn't grip well and gives off dust clouds as you go (it's that well presented), each track has a different background, that scrolls smoothly as you turn left and right and each has a different verge lining the roads: trees, rocks or water. The water's particularly nasty as it spells an instant crash if you leave the course.

Corners and bumps are extremely well presented giving a true 3D effect in the way that you see your rider rise up and down. This is done by grouping the trees closer together as you go up and further apart as you go down and moving your bike up and down the screen without making the bike get smaller or larger. The bikes which rise into view as you go over the bump makes it seem more real.

The most important things on the course are the ramps or jumps. You must hit these in a wheelie or you'll lose speed badly. The jumps often take you over some objects which would otherwise be fatal, such as rocks. Each jump may be avoided but this will also slow you down, as you leave the track in

doing so. There are no lives, just time, which runs out to end the game. The time remaining from one stage is carried forward to the next, so it is important to go as fast as you can on the first stage to give you more chance on the second and so on.

I've only reached stage 3 and it will take me a very long time (if ever) to complete it.

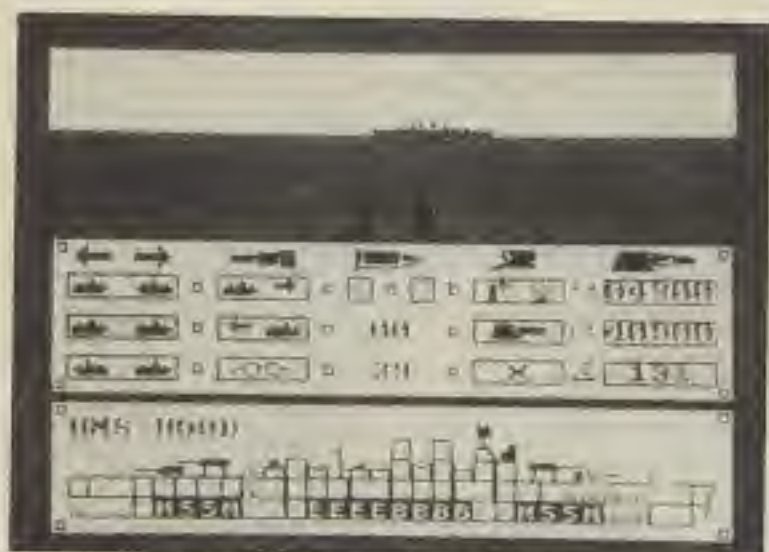
The game is extremely well presented. One or two player options, a choice of joystick or redefinable keys, pause, restart and a very comprehensive hi-score table. The race screen shows the high score, the time remaining, your score, your stage and your speed. The graphics are incredible. The way you bank, the shadow which changes as you put your foot out, the way you wheelie etc, are all superbly drawn. The graphics may only be monochromatic, but they are some of the best I've seen. The 3D effect is updated fairly often, and if you're travelling at a fair speed it is totally flicker free and looks very smooth. The sound effects are neat; the revving of your engine is superbly done, in fact it's just excellent all round. You can't really fault it. I especially like the way you dip down, it's so realistic.

This is without doubt the greatest and most accurate coin-op conversion I've seen. It captures all the playability and realism of the original and is one of the most compelling and addictive games I've played. This may sound a little over the top but this game has to be seen to be believed. I did not think the Speccy was capable of such a game. Buy it. It's just about the best there is!

SCORELINE	
Impact	95%
Originality	91%
Gameplay	96%
X-Factor	98%
OVERALL	96%



Bismarck



Title: Bismarck
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: PSS
Price: £9.95

The Bismarck was the pride of the Germany Navy. Thought to be unsinkable, she was completed in 1941 and plans were then drawn up for her to break out of her Baltic port into the Atlantic, where she and her support ship, the cruiser Prinz Eugen, could terrorise British convoys. Obviously, it was the British intention that she should do no such thing and, if they couldn't actually sink the Bismarck, they could at least cause enough damage to keep her in port for a long time.

The Bismarck's maiden voyage was actually her last. British Intelligence had picked up and decoded messages concerning her mission so the hunt was on. The Bismarck's plan was to sail from the Baltic up round Greenland and then down into the Atlantic. The British had to keep tabs on her while amassing sufficient forces to cause her real damage.

Bismarck made good her escape from port under cover of fog and was not picked up again until she was just off the Greenland coast. Guided by two cruisers, the British battleships, Hood and the Prince of Wales, honed in on their target, but in a short battle, the Hood was sunk and the Prince of Wales withdrew, although not before it had inflicted damage on the Bismarck. Further damage was then caused to the German ship by a torpedo attack from a Swordfish torpedo squadron launched from the carrier, Ark Royal. There was no escape for the Bismarck now, and a circle of ships waited for dawn in order to finish off the crippled battleship.

In the game, *Bismarck*, you can choose to play either side. The objectives are similar to those set out above. The British forces try to sink or hinder the Bismarck, the German forces try to make good their escape. The game is a mixture of strategy and action and is controlled by a series of menus and icons.

Apart from choosing which side you play, you can also select different levels of difficulty and whether you want to play the whole game or just one of the set encounters. This latter option gives you the chance to practice the action screens without the strategy element and is ideal for brushing up your technique of, for example, flying torpedo planes.

The strategy element takes place on the map screen. Your first job is to actually find the Bismarck. This requires the use of your radar, although you may be able to use spotter planes as well. There are also messages from the admiralty giving the Bismarck's position which has been found from intercepted radio messages. You must also check on the weather as it is a fair bet that the Bismarck will try to escape under a band of heavy cloud at night. You can manoeuvre your forces as you see fit with the objective of getting them close enough to force an encounter.

A battle switches the scene and takes you to the heart of the ship. Here, you must control guns, movement and damage control or, if you are a destroyer rather than a battleship, torpedoes.

A useful tactic when



manoeuvring your vessel is to aim for the place where the enemy's last shots landed — assuming they missed! The theory behind this is that the enemy will have noted the miss and corrected his sights. Damage must be repaired quickly. Explosions in a magazine, shell-room or boiler are not very healthy for you or your crew. The action screens are icon controlled and you will find that you need to think and react very quickly to the varying challenge.

If you are flying a Swordfish, you must fly your plane at the right speed and height before releasing your torpedo. This is hard enough to do if you are flying in a straight line but almost impossible if you are corkscrewing round the sky trying to avoid a barrage of anti-aircraft fire.

Bismarck is just about the best game PSS has released to date. Reminiscent of *Destroyer* from US Gold/Epyx on the C64, the combination of strategy and action works very well and the result is a challenging and entertaining game. Highly recommended.

SCORELINE

Impact	85%
Originality	75%
Gameplay	85%
X-Factor	90%

OVERALL

84%

Are old games for the new machines all we can hope for? Steve Applebaum thinks not.

There are very few innovators in the games industry these days; and those left are fast running out of new ideas. One of the latest companies to have gone into the creative doldrums is Gremlin, which is not the hive of activity it once was.



TOP NOTCH

Having done everything possible (so to speak) with *Monty Mole*, the crutch it always leaned on in extremis, Gremlin has finally begun to show tell-tale signs of fallowness — vis a reliance on licensed software and a now tendency to release conversions of old titles.

Some of Gremlin's newest programs have come from Kingsoft — the original source of *Typhoon*, an excellent shoot-em-up featured in *Gamer* last month. Unfortunately, though, even Kingsoft seems to be scraping the barrel as far as ideas go at the moment.

All that Kingsoft has been able to come up with lately is *Karate Master*, a game that, but for its name, could be described as a straight copy of *Karateka* for the Atari ST.

Karate Master, like *Karateka*, concerns a quest to reach the gates of an un-named palace. What you will find when you get there is not revealed in the game's inadequate documentation, however. And, personally, I do not really care, since the game is both extremely difficult and mind-numbingly boring.

As in *Karateka*, the action in *Karate Master* takes place on a horizontal strip representing the path to the palace. To progress, you must defeat a stream of oriental bully boys trained in karate. Now, this would not be so bad were it not for the fact that our hero is twice as weak as his opponents. And, since every hit received by his antagonists depletes his strength by one energy

point, winning a fight is almost impossible. What's more, if you do win a fight, you then have to stand up to a line of stones thrown at your man by unseen hands.

On top of this, *Karate Master* suffers from poor animation: the fighters' movements are jerky which should not be the case on the Atari ST considering its graphic capabilities.

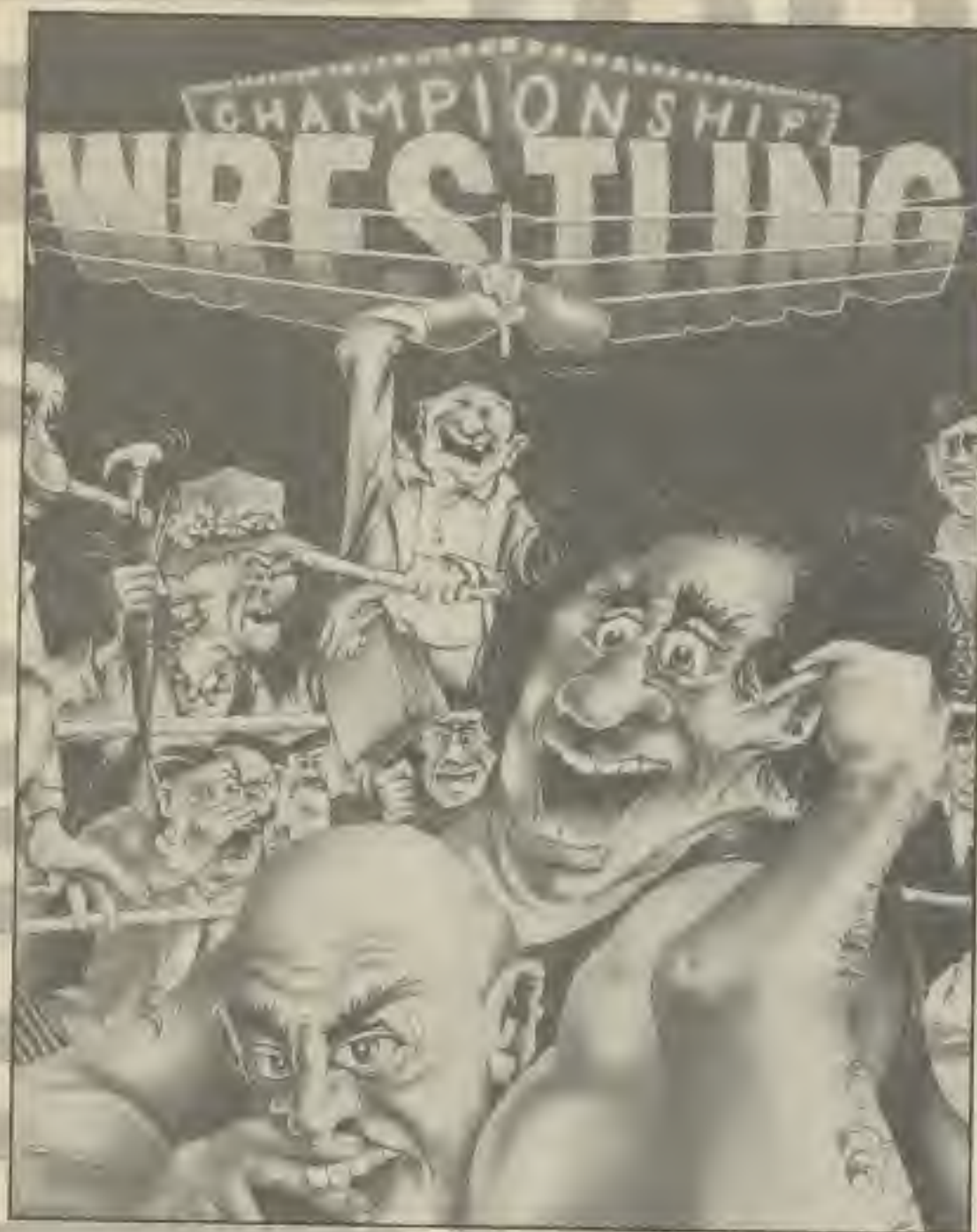
Karate Master represents a low point in Gremlin's history. Which is sad, considering some of the quality products it has come up with on other machines such as the C64.

On a happier note, Gremlin has recently launched an Atari ST version of *Trailblazer*, a game which should be familiar to most *Gamer* readers.

Those of you who missed our coverage of *Trailblazer* when it first appeared, report to the editor's office at once.

Trailblazer has the freshness and zest Gremlin was once renowned for. The aim of the game is to guide a football along a kind of three dimensional, multi-coloured conveyor belt, avoiding the various traps along the way. Progressing far





enough along the belt in a set time limit increases the level of difficulty.

Coloured sections on the belt denote areas with different characteristics. For instance, hitting a white strip causes the football to bounce, a green one to slow down, while a black one represents an abyss that must be traversed by bouncing across it.

However, as always, there is a catch; the football can only be bounced manually — that is by means of the joystick fire button — a fixed number of times. If you use your full quota of bounces too early in the game, you have little chance of completing the game.

Trailblazer can be played in either one of two player mode. In the latter the screen divides into two sections where each one features an individual conveyor-belt and ball, allowing players to race against each other as well as the clock.

END GAME?

One would think that Epyx, having completed its 'Games' trio, would have had enough of sport. But this does not appear to be the case because even before the dust has settled on *World Games* along comes an ST version of *Championship Wrestling*.

Very little has changed since *Championship Wrestling* appeared on the C64. Of course the graphics are that much better, especially the close-ups of the wrestlers' faces, but I hoped that the gameplay might have been made just that little bit

easier, my patience having been stretched to the limit when I played *Championship Wrestling* in its original format.

To my chagrin the new version is just as difficult and the complex manoeuvres that have to be performed with the joystick are still as wrist shattering as ever.

Much to my surprise, I actually managed to trounce the computer to become world champion. But sadly, my efforts were not rewarded with a special screen of any kind, I merely had the chance to put my name at the top of a hi-score table.

Naff as its ultimate climax is, *Championship Wrestling* beats all the karate and boxing games and provides more than a few laughs, which can't be a bad thing.

At the time of writing this article, Microdeal was just getting ready to launch a zap-em called *Goldrunner*. Obviously proud of its new game, Microdeal sent out a demo disk featuring some of the game's screens.

From the small vignettes provided, *Goldrunner* looks impressive. I cannot comment on its playability, since it was not possible to interact with any of the portions of the game included on the disk, but graphically it looks amazing.

The idea is to fly a spaceship, *Goldrunner*, across a 3D landscape, strafing as much as possible.

You can guide the *Goldrunner* up and down the screen as well as in and out of it. Which is to say, nearer to and further away from the surface of the planet.

On the ground are buildings of all shapes and sizes. Strange, half-buried alien faces peer through the Earth below, making *Goldrunner's* backgrounds some of the weirdest I have seen on any game for the ST. As well as the dangers below, you must also avoid being shot at by the masses of airborne creatures that fly your way. *Goldrunner* looks like an arcade fanatic's dream. Watch this space for more details of the finished version.

Plutos, from Micro Value, is another program that will have gamers rushing for their joysticks. Similar in style to *Uridium*, *Plutos* has you flying across the top of a gigantic mother ship, above which dart a host of extra-terrestrial craft, comprising silver disks, rockets, spinning balls and two blinking eyes, which must be dispensed with at the end of each level.

Initially, the small craft simply perform the odd bit of formation flying. As the game progresses, they increase in number and begin to shoot at your feeble looking ship. By level three the screen is full of small projectiles, threatening to bring your mission to an abrupt halt.

I am sure a lot more happens but my ineptness with a joystick precluded me from progressing further than level four. Like *Goldrunner*, *Plutos* is a must if you have a predilection for intergalactic shoot-outs. It does not tax your brain but stretches your reflexes to the limit.

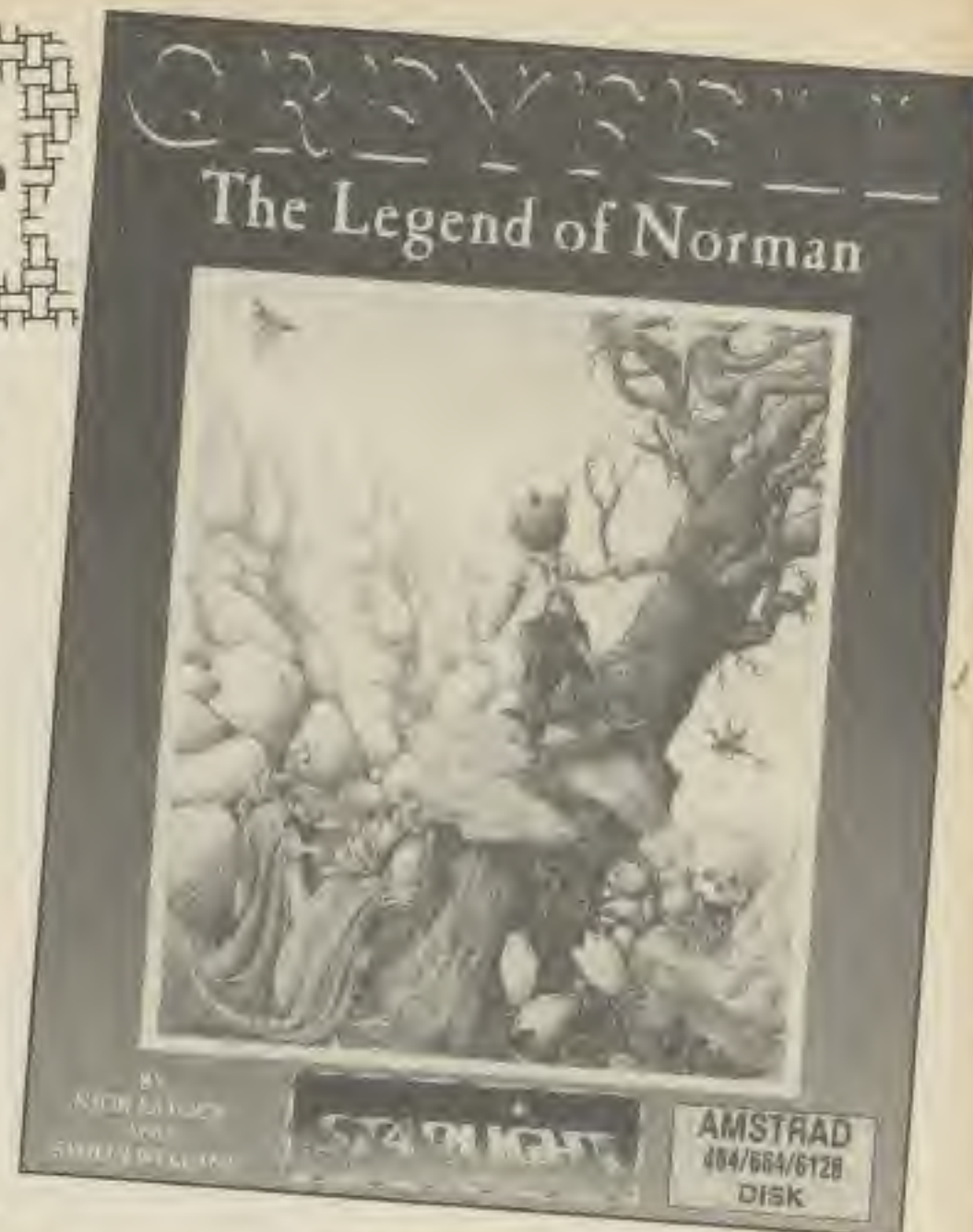
Starlight is a new name in software firmament. But behind the scenes we found an wise head on young shoulders.



Francis Lee is a man with a mission — to take Starlight to the top of the software charts. It's not only a calculated business venture for him but a means to absolve himself of blame — he recently left British Telecom's Beyond under a cloud (according to BT).

Francis is the man who won the Startrek contract, which signalled the start of the decline in Beyond's reputation. Is he guilty or innocent? No-one can say for sure but Francis argues his innocence with passion and believes that Starlight's success will effectively shift the blame from his shoulders.

Startrek hangs around the neck of Francis Lee like an albatross and it could be this deep seated wish to clear his name that gave rise to Starlight, his new company. Certainly, he was the leading light in bringing the Startrek contract to a British software house — despite fierce competition from abroad. Now his reputation is on the line and he is



UNSUNG HEROES

determined to show his mettle, which is probably why Starlight's first releases are of such an amazingly high standard.

The first title was *Greyfell*, with *Dogfight 2187* snapping close at its heels. Now the next release, *Deathscape*, is ready for launch. With just these three titles Starlight already has a small but varied catalogue including something to appeal to practically everyone.

Greyfell is another isometric maze adventure but nevertheless is probably unique. It features the usual puzzles, but a new dimension has been added with the addition of character interaction through speech bubbles. The hero of the game is a cat called Norman and as he meets the other creatures which inhabit *Greyfell* they sometimes give a cryptic clue in an intriguing shorthand language. The game is controlled by icon menus which can be a little cumbersome when the going gets tough but our reviewer described it as, "A must for all arcade adventurers" in last month's *Gamer*.

Dogfight 2187 is a split-screen, two player flight combat game which takes



the same basic concept as *Top Gun* and mixes in a bit of *Starglider* with elements of *Elite*. The meld produces an all-action game and shows what can be done with vector graphics. Because the 64 does not readily support vector graphics, the Starlight programmer had to develop techniques to speed up the action so that C64 owners would not have a second-rate game compared to that for Spectrum and Amstrad owners.

Dogfight is a race to find the parts of a generator to close up a hole in the space-time continuum which is allowing a vicious bunch of aliens through. You only have 30 minutes of realtime to save the world. You can try to assemble the generator or just treat the game as a good, old fashioned shoot-em-up.

The third game is *Deathscape*, which involves dirty dealings in a war game of the future. Set in the distant future, when mankind has developed a way of settling their differences which does not involve mass destruction but the battle of sole combatants in an arena, the *Deathscape*.

intends to "take on the big boys and show them how it should be done." His professional approach emphasises teamwork. He is part of the team, although his word is the last, of course. He says he has no time for prima donnas. The advantage of teamwork is that promising new programmers can work in tandem with older hands, which gives them necessary training and ensures the team doesn't break down if someone leaves.

One thing Francis doesn't lack is confidence. His roots are in hard pop music world, where he was a legal advisor. He first got involved with computers when he joined publishers, EMAP, in January 1984. He eventually joined a team working on a monthly electronics and computing magazine. It was here that he met Bill Delaney who formed Beyond.

By now computers had fired Francis with the same enthusiasm he'd felt back in his days with the likes EMI, CBS and WEA. So he jumped at the chance to join Delaney's team at Beyond as sales

manager.

The BT takeover was a blow to the Beyond team and spirits fell even further when Delaney decided to quit because of the takeover. So it was that Francis Lee became Beyond's new leading light.

To this day Francis maintains that he was the scapegoat for Beyond's ill-fortunes and that the problem was the battle between himself and Telecom's accounts department. As Delaney had found, Francis discovered that large profit margins were of paramount importance to BT and decisions were made above his head on this basis by people unsympathetic to his and Beyond's philosophy. The end was quick.

Now, months on, sat behind his own desk in his own office, all the flash and bluster has returned. Ariolasoft has taken the responsibility for getting Starlight's output into the shops but both companies take great pains to emphasise that that is as far as the relationship goes. Starlight sinks or swims on its own and only time will tell whether Mr Lee has the last laugh.

UNSUNG HEROES

Deathscape is built on ten levels of interconnecting electromagnetic tunnels and the fighters must seek and destroy their opponent to make a political point. But show me a political system and I'll show you a subversive. In this case the subversive baddies are the Vargs who obviously never developed a game akin to cricket during their evolutionary history!

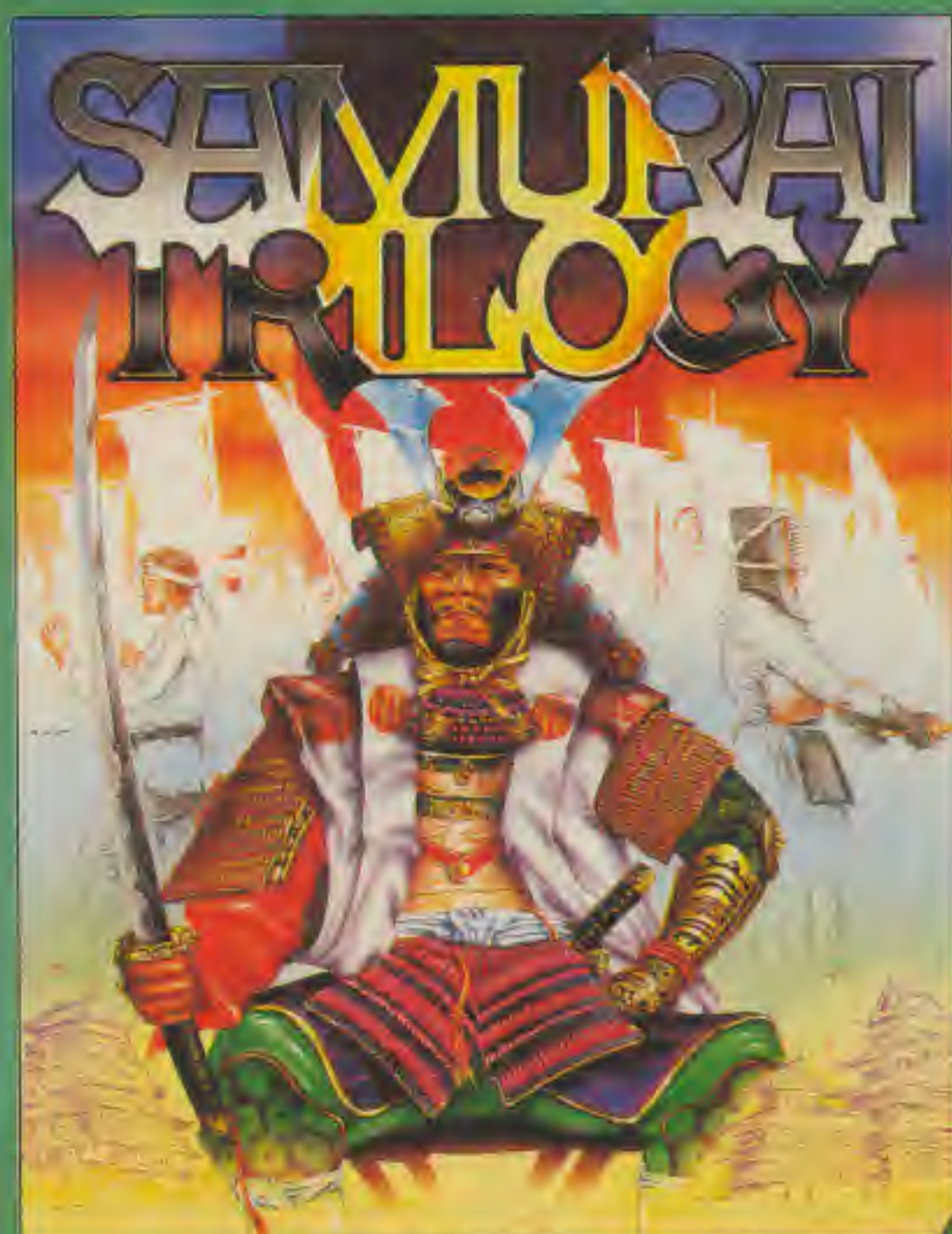
In good faith you entered the *Deathscape* ready for combat but the dastardly Vargs have literally flooded the tunnels with their invasion forces. One against thousands is a pretty good basis for the shoot-em-up of a lifetime even if your lifespan can be severely limited by it!

Graphically, the game is very innovative, but what really grabs one's attention is the talking head of your commander who appears from time to time to plead for your help to fend off Vargian attack forces raiding the mother ship outside the arena. You must keep switching from attack in the tunnels to defence of the mother ship until you penetrate the Vargian force sufficiently to attack their mother ship. To do this all ten levels of the arena must be cleared and a fortress destroyed to gain the necessary codes to lower the alien mother ship's defence shield.

Enough of the commercials. What is Starlight really about? Francis is a man of principle and, in his own words, he



Software...



In an age in which honour was revered, from a time when grace and beauty were virtues, a class of warriors set themselves apart to dedicate their lives to a perfection in combat that in itself was an artform, to a discipline of mind that became a religion. The attaining of such excellence required an extraordinary diligence in self-denial and training in order to achieve the ultimate accolade 'War Lord', Kendo, Karate and finally Samurai are the tests that must be mastered before such honour can be bestowed.



that's
out of
this world

GREMLIN

KRAKOUT
CBM64/128 £9.99 Tape £14.99 Disk
Spectrum £7.99 Tape
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In former times, Britain was Great and the nation to be reckoned with. The Empire stretched round the world and for many peoples, Britannia waved the rules which were inextricably tied up with the laws of cricket. Even the World Wars came in two innings.

Renowned for daring exploits and cucumber sandwiches, we umpired the Empire and knocked boundaries for six. By jingo, what it was to live

STIFFLIP

In the search for perfection, Palace think they have found their empirical formula for success.



Title: Stiffip & Co.
Computer: Commodore 64
Supplier: Palace Software
Price: £9.95

in a land of heroes shaped by institutions such as Eton, Harrow and the MCC. The repressive influence of an army of bannies ensured that the British would never wander far from their native shores and the roll of honour bore such names as Nelson, Wellington, Livingstone, W E G and Viscount Sebastian Stiffip.

Driven by nationalistic fervour and sheer stupidity, Stiffip had gathered together a band of eccentrics who roamed the world righting wrongs and crushing evil.



Stiff & Co.



wherever they found them. Of all their exploits, none has been more celebrated than their struggle to vanquish the evil despot, Count Chameleon, master of disguise and sworn enemy of the establishment. Much of the story had been lost in the apocryphal mists of legend, but after much research the jolly good crew at Palace Software have unearthed the truth and committed the saga to the silicon medium. Now everyone can relive the crucial battles to rid the world of the Count's evil Rubbertronic ray gun. Well, it's a real battle for real as they go out for the Count.

The truth was established in behalf of Palace by the indomitable Binary Vision team. Their clarity of vision was enhanced by an intriguing system of viewing the accounts of Stiff and Co. through the lens at the bottom of a pint glass, thus allowing sufficient distortion for the ultimate truth to be revealed.



Binary's researchers, Paul Norris and Rupert Bowater, were aided and abetted by Richard Joseph on sound and graphically assisted by Mark Eason and Anna Williams.

According to the team, it appears that Stiff missed the excitement of his days as a fighting man in the Great War where he earned the dubious monicker: the Yellow Baron. Bandits at one o'clock could never be replaced by tea four o'clock and bed at half past seven. And so it was that he gathered together with three like-minded eccentrics and set out to save the Empire.

Miss Palmyra Primbottom, the

only lady team member, already had a prodigious array of exploits to her name. First winner of the gruelling Girl Guides deportment badge, she later became known for her work with the Womens' Temperance League for Clothing the Savages in Darkest Surrey. Guided by her family motto 'Godliness is next to cleanliness', she modified this during her experiences in the tropics to 'cleanliness is next to impossible.'

Little is known about former lounge lizard Colonel R G Bargie except that he earned the honorable Order of the GNT and bar several times every evening. His prime motivation for joining Stifflyp's company was for his family's honour, not as a skilful manoeuvre to escape his creditors, nor had it anything to do with the rumours of the vast riches to be gained in South America.

The final and least memorable member of the team is Professor Braindeath whose researches into amnesia involved such commitment that little is remembered of his former achievements. Declared clinically dead a decade before the team's South American adventure, he forsook his researches into producing a device to put the middle back into doughnuts for the promise of adventure, excitement and 'all that sun'. The professor is almost living proof that all mad professors are not necessarily bad.

What dynamic force caused the forging of such a team as Stifflyp and Co? What irresistible challenge drew the team to the South American banana republic of Banarnia? Why did they bother? The answer lies in the telegram which was unearthed in the British Museum's collection of documents suitable for shredding machines.

It appears that the entire rubber crop of Count Chameleon's adopted country had disappeared under suspicious circumstances which led Viscount Stifflyp to the conclusion that the feared Rubbertronic raygun was more than just a rumour whispered in the corridors of power. Determined to get to the bottom of the mystery he called his team together and set off for Banarnia's golden shores. "What shores?", we hear you cry. "I'll have a G'n'T", replies Colonel Bargie whose own researches into rubber stretch as far as bouncing numerous cheques.

The fiendish raygun threatens all that makes Britain grate ... sorry ... great. The dratted weapon is devised to neutralise the starch in wing-collars, soften firm moral fibres and loosen stiff upper lips. Worst of all, this answer to

STIFFLYP & Co.

nationalistic washing powder will unpredictably alter the bounce of the revered cricket ball, the regal orb which complements the sceptre of State: the willowy cricket bat.

We join our heroes in the first innings as they arrive at Banarnia's customs post. A tax must be paid before anyone can continue but with only three shillings to rub together another means of payment must be sought. How can our heroes go on? Try as I may my best efforts were met with a hail of bullets and the early retirement of my team to the great pavilion in the sky.



Desperately I tried a long shot which Palace refuse to let me report but it sent the Banarnian General shooting off into the distance with cries of 'Ariba, ariba!'

Free to roam, it took seconds for the Colonel to find a local bar, but his reputation for vulcanised cheques had preceded him and, morally crushed, he was at the end of his tether when physically flattened by a ten ton weight which ended his role in the game.

Each member of the team can be controlled independently by an ingenious icon menu offering six activities. *Chinwag* allows you to interact with the other jolly characters in the game. *Beetle Off* permits movement in one of four polar directions. *Do One's Stuff* calls up an activity menu so that your chosen team member can get things done and *State of Play* gives the statistics of your players' energy and how well the universal plan is working. *Change Batter* is the icon which controls which character you are using and the central screen which shows the previous cell and current cell of the action in comic strip style changes to display a *Meanwhile ...* caption.

By far the most interest icon is the one marked *Biff!*, through which you may indulge in a bout of fisticuffs with the Count's henchmen. Selecting this icon causes a battle screen to pop up. Here the vital statistics of the fracas are displayed in graphic form. A rotating boxing glove indicates the power of your punch and a spring-loaded glove shows your opponent's blow.

Before indulging in the noble art you have to select your punch mode. If the white chicken's feather is not chosen, you have three options: left hoo, right uppercut or the dastardly caddish punch below the belt. Be warned the swift jab at the nether regions is not the mark of a true Brit and should be used sparingly to avoid divine intervention into your affairs.

The accuracy of your punch is determined by an ingenious target whose concentric rings rotate eccentrically unless you can hold a crosshair at the centre of the frame in which the rings appear. Success results in a resounding whack on the jaw of your opponent, failure means a glancing tap.

Although the number of locations is relatively limited when compared to conventional text adventures, the problems to be solved more than than compensate. Always play the game with your tongue firmly in your cheek as you bite the bullet and you are sure to succeed. Solve problems such as what to do with a reed, a knife and a charming relative of Hissing Sid, work out the strengths and weaknesses of your heroic team to win the day.

The icon system certainly adds a new dimension to adventuring even though it can become cumbersome when a fight is brewing. As I said before the game is contained on the tape as two innings, one per side of tape. Entry to the second part is determined by a code achieved on side one.

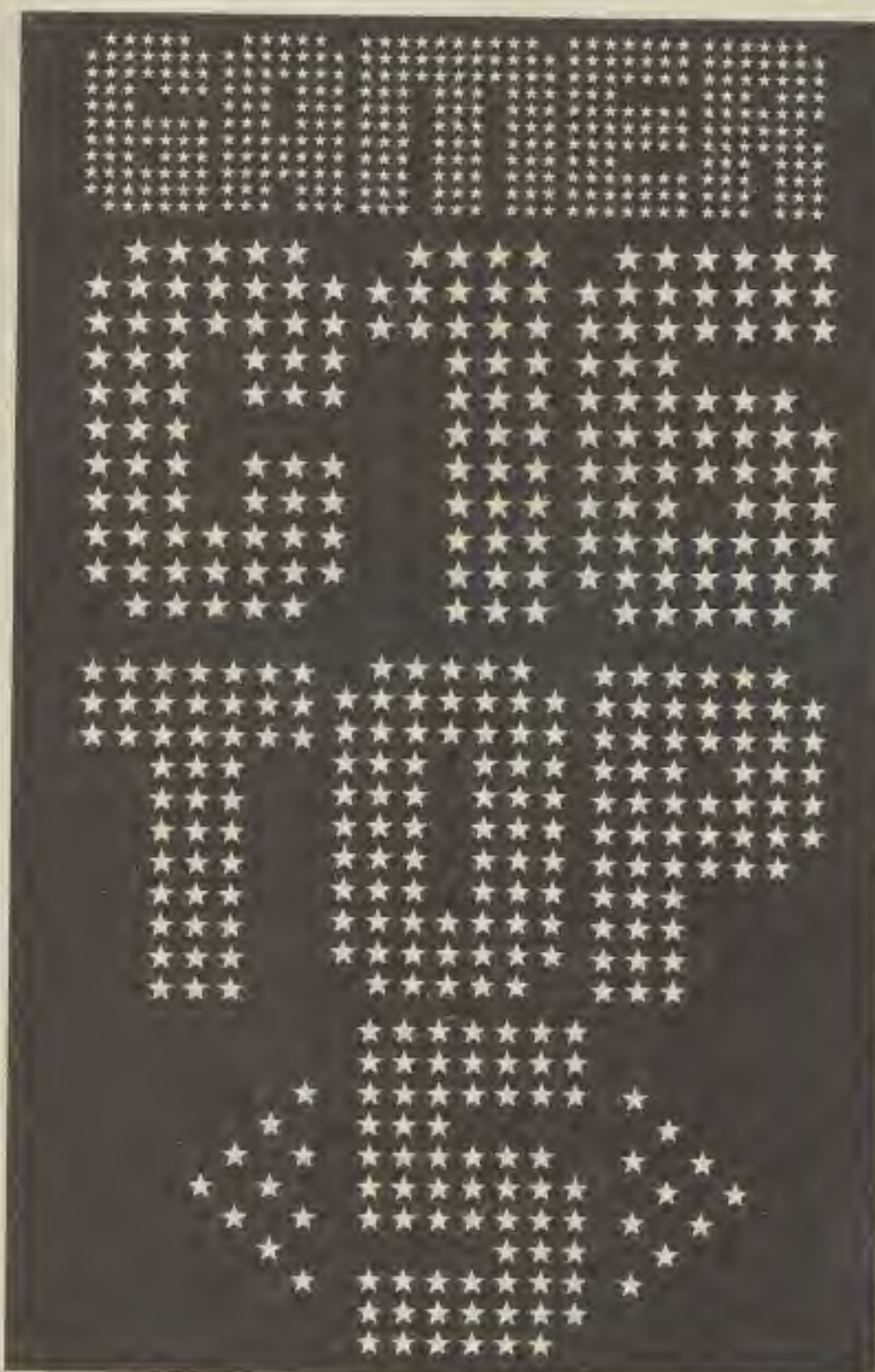
As always, Palace have come up trumps. Stifflyp and Co. has a style and sense of humour which smacks of the old Empire days. Bounders abound, morals are upheld at all costs and the arcade element adds punch to another spiffing game from Palace.

SCORELINE

Impact	95%
Originality	95%
Gameplay	85%
X-Factor	95%

OVERALL

93%



CI6 GAMER GOLDS

As *Voidrunner/Hellgate* got the CI6 the first Gamer Gold, we decided that we should put together five other CI6 games that deserve a Gamer Gold.

The last time we had a CI6 feature was about a year ago and it consisted mainly of Gremlin compilations and Mastertronic cheapies. It was intended to be a final feature on the CI6 before it quietly went to the silicon chip graveyard in the sky. However, since then there has been a CI6 revival, thanks mainly to Anco and Gremlin and programmers such as Udo Gertz and Shaun Southern. It is interesting to compare the quality of the CI6 games around nowadays and the older CI6 games.

Many people in the industry believed the CI6 was capable of great things and, when you look at some of the games here, it is easy to see why. The CI6 has been around for some time and, I believe that, if the 64K RAM pack becomes more common, the CI6 will be around for a long time to come. It's surprising what you can do if you quadruple the memory available.

Also some of the Plus 4 software is excellent these days. *Saboteur*, *Mercenary* and the three *Bridgehead* screens all show what can be done so I feel I must plug the RAM-pack as much as possible as it could push the CI6 ahead of the Amstrad in terms of games sales.

There really is a multitude of good games for the CI6, as Rory Newman discovers.

Title: Winter Events
Supplier: Anco
Price: £7.95

After the huge success of Epyx/US Gold's *Winter Games*, CI6 owners expected cut-down junk and it came. There was Tynesoft's appalling *Winter Olympics*, then Udo Getz, the German who made a name for himself in the days of the old VIC20, produced this classic. It has been said that *Winter Games* is among the top three sports sims on the home 8-bit machines.

To begin, the opening ceremonies are very nice. Mr Athlete runs along and lights the flame; similar to *Summer Games 2*. The game's graphics are well drawn, neatly animated.

Menu: There is a multitude of options here. These include number of players (1-4), option to compete in all or some events and a practise option. When choosing events you are given the full list and choose the ones you want. You may also see the world records, save them or load up ones that you've saved before. This is all very well done using large characters. When you've decided what to do, you must enter your name and pick your country — there are 10. Then the national anthem of the country you've picked is played. The rendition of our one isn't bad; more faithful than the version that occurs in the Epyx range. Anyway, now the fun starts.

Biathlon: This is the first event and compares favourably with *Winter Games*. When going on the straight or uphill you must waggle in rhythm, going downhill just keep pulling the joystick down. At the shooting range loading is achieved by moving the joystick up then down. You have five shots and may shoot at any of the five targets, as the sight moves in a pulse wave from one side to the other and back again. I found this difficult but very addictive. There are a variety of backdrops, all well drawn, by why does my man have a green face?

Slalom: In the Epyx game there were two naff skating events. This game has two excellent skiing events. This is the first: you're on a 3D course with trees and gates coming towards you, you must go around the gates left and right alternately. I found this fairly difficult — you're disqualified if you miss three gates. I did complete the course — travelling very slowly. Again, the graphics are good, as is the 3D effect. Watch out for the icy puddles though.



Ski Jump: Risk life and limb as you hurtle down the giant runway. Press fire to leap into the air where upon the screen changes to show giant pictures of skiers. The one on the right shows the position you should be in and you're on the left. Left and right lean you backwards and forwards, joystick up uncrosses your skis and joystick down unbends your knees. If you maintain the correct flight and landing positions you should land safely. A definite improvement on the Epyx version.

Speed Skating: This can be played by two people simultaneously. One player is at the top, the other at the bottom, with a bar in the middle showing the players' relative positions and how far they've gone. Basically, it's a matter of getting into the rhythm. The animation is out of this world and again beats *Winter Games*.

Bobsled: The usual format but very well done and again the graphics are great. There's a map on the right which shows you how far you've gone. It's a vicious course but becomes easier with practice. Another one up on Epyx.

Downhill: Downhill skiing is the final event. The controls are the same as the slalom but with up and down as crouch and stand up respectively. Again there are icy puddles and the course is marked by flares. Crashing into flags isn't penalised but you'll lose time. Another excellent event.

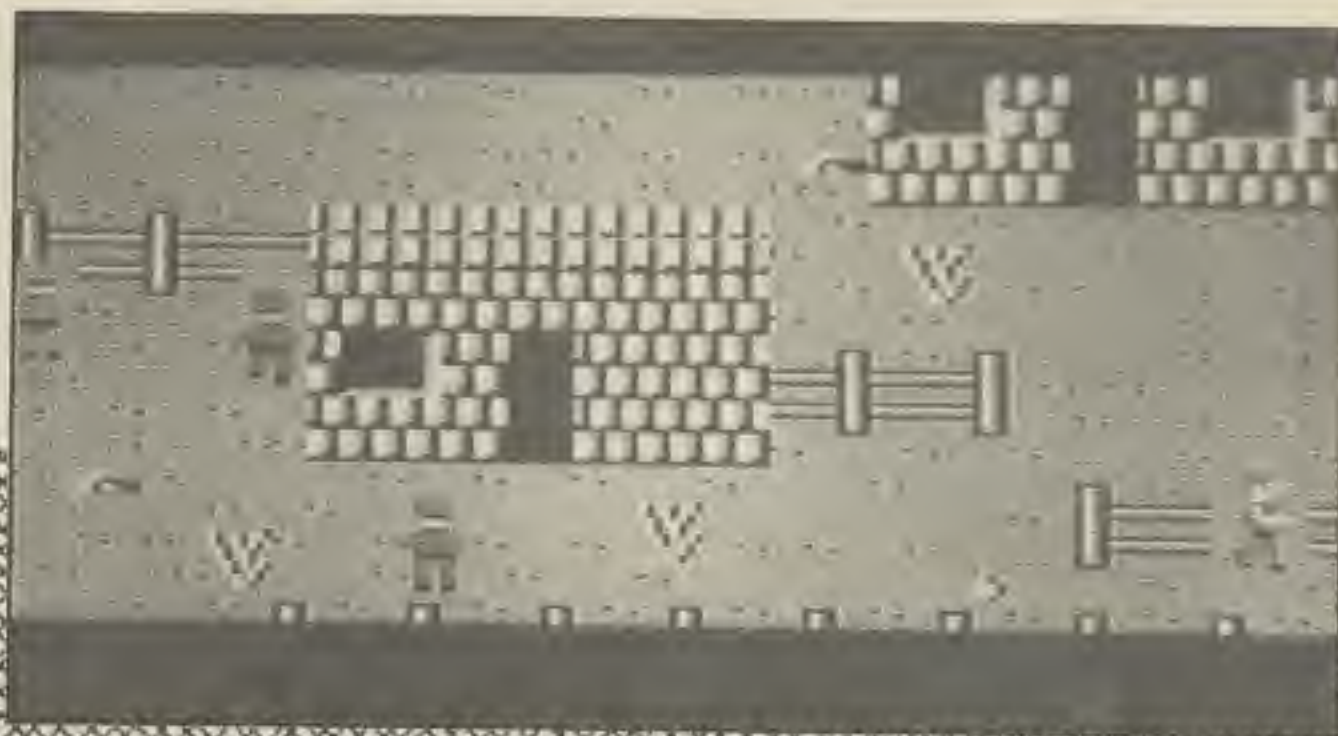
Great graphics. Several good tunes. Great game. But how does it compare? Well, the skating has been replaced by skiing and that gives it the edge. It also is what a CI6 can do with a little thought. You can't fault it!

SCORELINE

Impact	99%
Originality	65%
Gameplay	98%
X-Factor	99%
OVERALL	91%



Title: Phantom
Supplier: Tynesoft
Price: £7.95



With *Gauntlet* being the in game at the moment, I've been dreading the moment when someone attempted a C16 conversion. This new Tynesoft release, however, is very good. I suppose it's a *Gauntlet* clone but it's very different in many respects. For a start, it's only one player and only scrolls left and right, but as one player *Gauntlet* clones go, this is one of the better ones — very playable and immense fun. The object of the game is to exorcise four buildings using a high powered laser.

Each house has four floors and to go between floors you have to destroy all the ghosts and transporters on the floor you are on and then go to the staircase. Transporters are nasty, large, evil-looking apparitions which act as a gateway between the world and hell, thus transporting the ghosts into the buildings. In effect, they work like the generators do in *Gauntlet* but at a much faster rate, so the quicker you take them out, the easier the task.

Each of the four buildings has four different floors so you end up with 16 tough levels. Each floor is a very large bi-directional scrolling window at least three screens long and often a lot longer. The window, or floor, is a top-on view with the walls surrounding it and other walls forming a sort of matrix. The walls are well drawn and smooth. Over 30 flicker-free fast moving sprites can be on the screen at the same time, says the instructions and, although I haven't counted, there are a lot.

The ghosts are well drawn too, look spooky and move in four directions. Unfortunately, their movement algorithm is very good as well and you can often end up trapped. You can also move in four directions, but your sprite is very good and very fast, and has the standard top-on view. Your energy, initially 99, is constantly being drained due to 'the face of evil in each building'.

Also, if you come near a ghost, your energy will be drained quickly,

so contact must be avoided at all costs. You also carry a self-cooling plasma bolt laser and back-up fuel tank — gun to you — and the laser is capable of firing up to 70 high powered bolts over an unlimited distance. The laser stays on — during which time, you can't move. So be careful — the ghosts can catch you if you're stuck firing into thin air! Also the ghosts can't be fired at if you're very near something, so don't get cornered, you can't blast your way out and eventually you'll die!

The laser bolt level is shown by a bar and is limited, so don't blast indiscriminately or you may end up with none left and that is dangerous.

Around the building are eight objects to be found:

Keys — open all doors, but can only be used once

Normal fuel — replenishes your laser power supply

Power fuel — similar but with slow but powerful fuel

Fast fuel — ditto, but with fast

but weak fuel

Food — replenishes energy

Bombs — very useful, takes out all baddies (including transporters) on the screen

Radio immobiliser — a fancy gadget that stuns ghosts

Glucose pills — speeds you up temporarily.

Remember that all but the keys are few and far between. There is a joystick or keyboard option, music on or off and pause. The game is tough, demanding and well executed. Sixteen tough levels which will keep you happy for a long time. The game is multi-load — load in the loader and then each of the houses. An excellent game which is great all round.

Now, if anyone can produce a two player

SCORELINE

Impact	96%
Originality	75%
Gameplay	94%
X-Factor	98%

OVERALL 97%

Title: Trailblazer
Supplier: Gremlin Graphics
Price: £7.95



This Shaun Southern game caused a stir when it was released last year. As you will see from the screen shot, you control a ball — a spinning football — which you must keep control of as you bomb down a space track against a background of the stars. This track, planted in space, is five lanes wide and is made up of various coloured squares. You can move left and right and across the track but you can't fall off the edges. You can accelerate and slow down, and jump. You have five jumps per level and a jump will send you spinning high into the air over many obstacles. There is a time limit for each level and any time remaining is carried onto the next level. The

game ends when your time runs out.

The C16 version has 16 different courses, all fairly long and all very difficult, which is more than either the Amstrad or the Speccy versions. The latter doesn't even have colour. Okay, the C16 version only has the arcade mode, not the practice as well, but excluding the 64 version, you still can't beat it. The scrolling is ultra slick, 3D. The large blocks move smoothly towards you, spreading out as they come without a touch of flicker; it is all extremely well done. The squares make the most of the C16's colour and are varied, often giving the two-tone checker board effect and making the individual squares easy to identify and very clear. There are seven types of square to note:

Grey squares — the grey squares in two tones indicate start and finish. The timer starts when you leave the grey area and stops when you hit it at the end. This gives you a chance to get into lane, ready for the action to start.



Blue squares — the blue squares bounce your ball high into the air, further than just a jump. They act as a trampoline so the faster you hit the harder you go. Essential to get over some of the gaps.

Cyan squares — cyan squares are really nasty. When in a patch of cyan your controls are reversed so left becomes right and accelerating slows you down, etc. Thankfully, the jumps still work, giving you some chance.

Green squares — these squares quite simply speed you up, even if you are going as fast as you can.

Red squares — these squares slow you down wickedly.

Purple squares — these are missing from the Speccy and Amstrad versions and are the opposite of blue squares, they throw you backwards. The faster you hit 'em, the farther back you go!

Black squares — these are really evil. Hit these and you go down into the depths of space; this is where time is lost as it takes time to get you back on the tracks. A

neat feature is the way that you roll on the lip before you fall in, if you didn't completely hit.

The warp square of the 64 version is missing, but you can't have everything in 16K. The graphics are excellent and the game has a 64 quality sound track. Joystick or keyboard option is available.

This game is compulsive, addictive and fun to play. It's good to see software houses actually taking care over the C16 (take note Elite). The game is one of the best around and shows the world that the C16 can be as good as the Speccy or Amstrad if the right person is programming it. Thanks Gremlin.

SCORELINE

Impact	97%
Originality	99%
Gameplay	96%
X-Factor	98%

OVERALL 97%

Title: Monty On The Run
Supplier: Gremlin Graphics
Price: £6.95

Monty Mole, the miner, was wanted by the police, captured and sentenced to years of hard labour in the horrible Scudmore Prison. With the help of Sam Stoot, he escaped and is now on the run. He must now collect gold coins on his way to the cross Channel ferry and freedom.

Monty on the Run is the classic platform game and was a huge success on the C64. The C16 version compares favourably. The game offers 30 screens and the switch between screens is excellent, faster than your eyes and totally flicker-free. There are thirty totally different screens where a different strategy is needed for each one, with platforms, loads of different nasties, ladders, ropes, wire fences, poles, and all sorts of things.

And the graphics? Terry Doid, the graphics man, has done a great job on them. The C64 version was acclaimed for its graphics and the C16 graphics are every bit as good. The sound, however, isn't. Only a few FX when you collect a coin or die. Not particularly good. But the graphics are so good you don't worry about the sound. If you don't like playing games in total silence, may I suggest the wearing of a Walkman. The thing is you just can't get everything for 16K. But the controls are simple: left and right; up and down for ropes, ladders and wire etc; fire jumps you straight up into the air and fire left and right jumps you sideways. Okay, all this is excellent, but how does it compare with the C64 version?

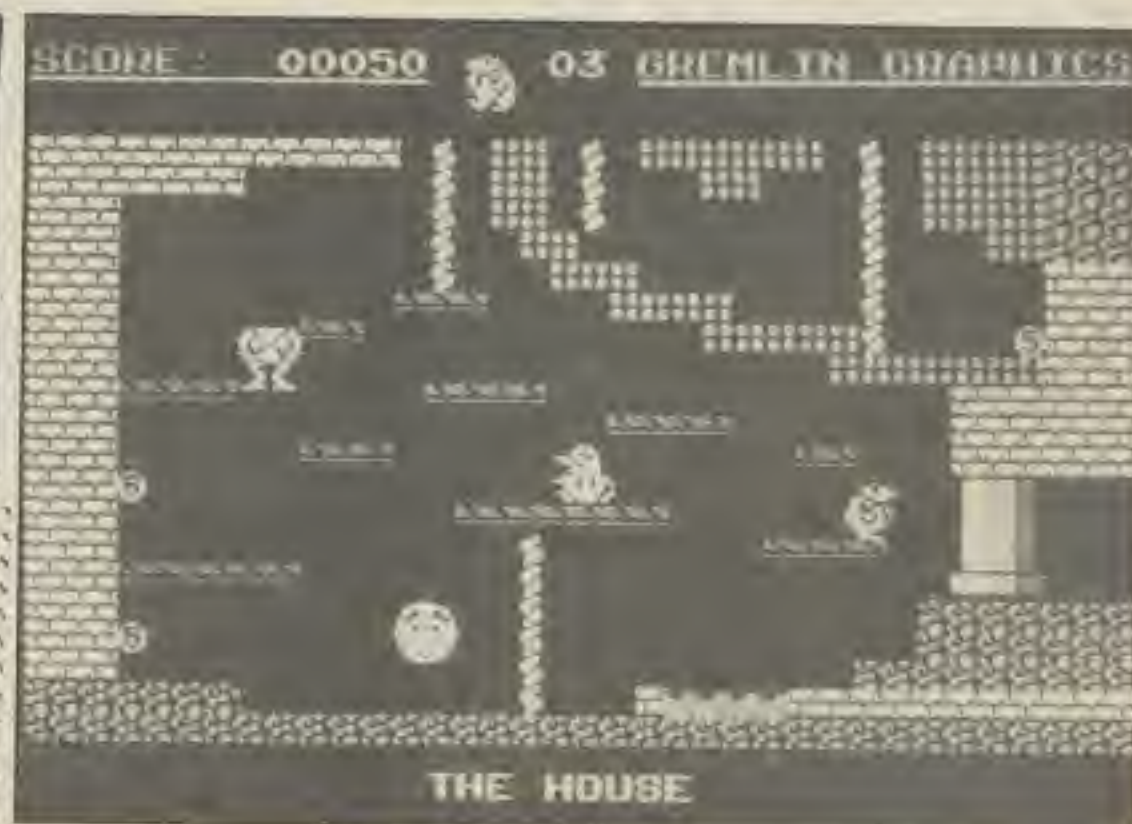


The C64 version had 49 screens, this only has 30. The graphics are about the same, but the C64 version has an amazing in-game soundtrack, one of the best I've ever heard. The C64 version also had a hi-score table which the C16 doesn't, so you can't use the cheat mode which worked on the C64, typing in "I want to cheat" in the hi-score table. Consequently, the C16 doesn't have the even more amazing bit of music that the 64 had, whilst entering your name, the best bit I've ever heard. But it doesn't (thank God) have the freedom bit and Monty doesn't somersault when you jump sideways. Now, if the C16 owners bought a ram pack, they could then incorporate many of these features. But, even as it stands, this is an excellent game.

SCORELINE

Impact	98%
Originality	91%
Gameplay	98%
X-Factor	97%

OVERALL 96%



Title: Bridge Head
Supplier: Anco
Price: £7.95

As a member of an elite Marine unit, you have been ordered to secure the bridgehead, the only access to enemy occupied territory. Your unit consists of only eight men and the bridge is well patrolled by sentries, but once secured, the way is open to storm the enemy's headquarters.

The unit has to make its way stealthily. You have only a knife and a limited supply of grenades, which can be used to blow up land mines or the enemy sentries. There are occasional ammunition stores from which your supply of hand grenades can be replenished, but the stores are well guarded.

The enemy, however, is well armed with bazookas and even a new type of homing anti-personnel missile.

There are five levels — eight on the Plus/4 or the C16 with a 64K RAM pack, and each level has a scrolling background about eight screens in length. The scrolling is bi-directional so you can make 'strategic decisions', which means you can run back and climb up a ladder if a missile is coming towards you. At the end of each level, the scrolling stops and you must clear the remaining soldiers before you can start on the next level.



Commando style. At the end of the fifth (or eighth) sector, there is the enemy headquarters, your goal, and destroying that wins the game.

The game is actually a *Green Beret* clone but with more levels. Scrolling is very smooth and slick. Here are the eight stages:

Stage 1 is set against a mountainous backdrop, with three heights. At the top is a rickety looking rope bridge. Stage 2 is in a harbour, again with three heights. Stage 3 is superb. It's similar to *Green Beret* — giant tanks with missiles on top. Three heights again.

Stage 4 is set against giant purple warehouses. Guess how many heights? Stage 5 is against some buildings with radar on top. Stage 6 is similar but with different buildings. No radar, but instead



lookout posts. Stage 7 is set against a giant purple submarine, which is very Russian looking. The final stage is against the tents, until you make it to the headquarters.

All of the stages show the sea in dark blue and the sky in light. The graphics are extremely well animated and the controls simple. For instance, left and right make you run in that particular direction, up makes you climb, down makes you climb down. You can't jump, but you can duck.

The enemy is easy to recognise — the white figures are commanders, while the dark and light

green ones are just patrolling soldiers, but the dark red ones carry bazookas and the dark blue ones fire the lethal homing missiles. Also watch out for the mines, which can only be taken out with grenades.

All in all a very good game. A must for any C16 owner.

SCORELINE

Impact	98%
Originality	75%
Gameplay	98%
X-Factor	97%
OVERALL	92%

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Hi! My name's Mr. Head. Some say I'm the one with the brains but I don't think my flat footed friend would agree. I'm a real sharp shooter, but without my pal Mr. Heels I'd get nowhere fast... or slow! I can jump like a flea and even glide but Heels is the Daley Thompson of the two of us - he's FAST! Together, if we can find each other, we really do make an awesome twosome, and that's the only way we can overcome the emperor Blacktooth. The last time we entered Castle Blacktooth we found the crowns of THREE of the suppressed Kingdoms but by that time I'd run out of doughnut ammunition and my buddy was lost somewhere in the Safari world - it was the closest we had come to defeating that rascal - we were jumping for joy, splitting out sides, dying with laughter... we were Head over Heels!

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Having trouble getting started? Or stuck half way through? Kirk Rutter has the hint for you.

RHYMING CLUES

To kill the werewolf you must find a silver dagger of some kind, then use the mushrooms that form a ring. Don't delay just step right in, you'll disappear then come back up and see a door — just use the club. Beyond the door there lies the witch. To get the dagger just shoot the bitch. The golden cross is what you need to rid the land of the evil seed.

To freeze the river you must find a wand of ice. Just kill the witch marked WIC and shoot the river. Now dance with glee.

To get the parchment you must seek a fiery monster that cannot speak. His breath is hot, his blood is cold, just grab the money and be real bold. Now find the troll marked

TK and you'll see a huge locked door that needs a key. Beyond the door there lies a house, stalk it quiet as a mouse, once inside just do a swap now leave quickly and do not stop.

The scrying glass lies in the house where the henchmen stay (MSG). Just shoot the man to get his wares. The skeletons give an evil stare.

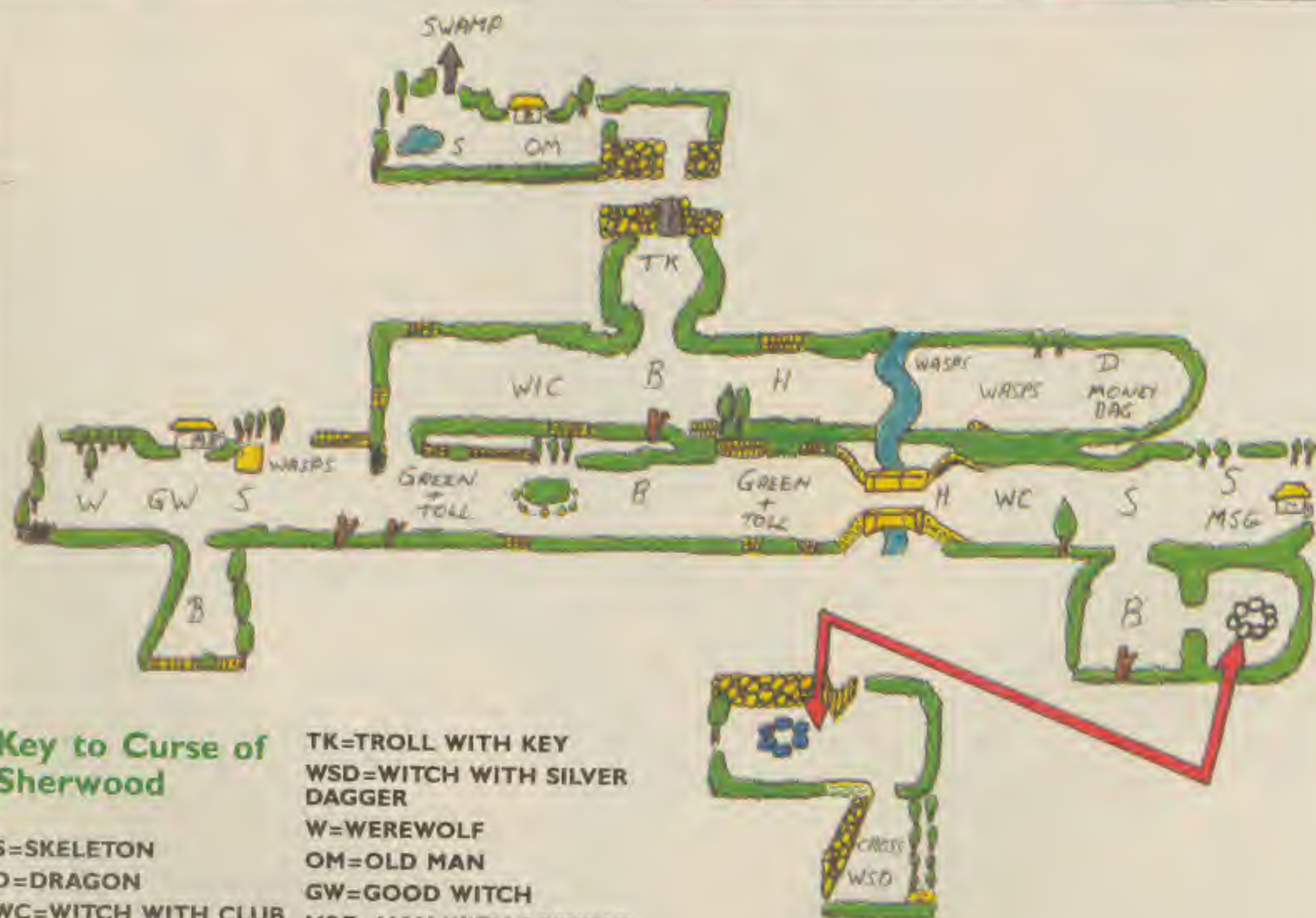
Now take the items to a good witch's house, stalk it quiet as a mouse.

Well, that's what you need to know, and I'm sad to say that's the end of the show. I hope this has helped you folks, but don't expect to finish it straight away, you've still to cross the swamp! Good luck.

TRACK AND FIELD 2

Some of you may have problems clearing heights of 2.40 metres upwards, well here is a way to clear any height.

When the game sounds for you to start your run-up press the right cursor or move the joystick right once and you will see your speed go up to about 300, wait about one second then do it once more, then jump when you are just by the mat. If you have too much speed your legs will knock the bar off, too little and you will land on the ground, but if you do it just right you will land on the mat and the computer will think you have cleared the height.

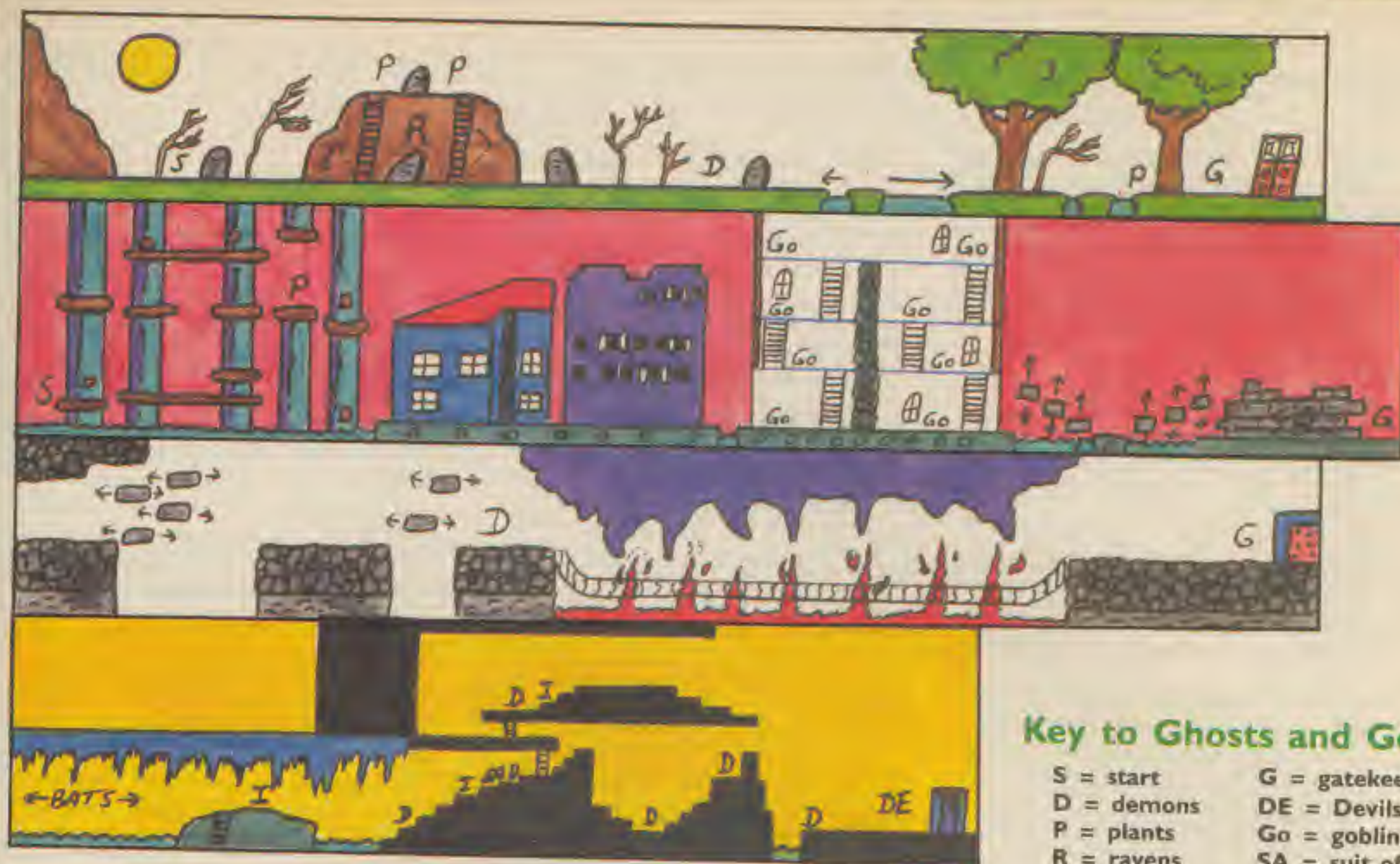


Key to Curse of Sherwood

S=SKELETON
D=DRAGON
WC=WITCH WITH CLUB
H=HENCHMEN (3)
B=BATS

TK=TROLL WITH KEY
WSD=WITCH WITH SILVER DAGGER
W=WEREWOLF
OM=OLD MAN
GW=GOOD WITCH
MSG=MAN WITH SCRYING GLASS
WIC=WITCH WITH ICE WAND

GET OUT



Key to Ghosts and Goblins

S = start	G = gatekeeper
D = demons	DE = Devils
P = plants	Go = goblins
R = ravens	SA = suit of armour

MGT?

Here is a guide to some of the more difficult problems in this nice little game from Activision/Loricels, courtesy of Mike Roberts.

The puzzles can be pursued logically: a little bit of ingenuity and a good map will take you a long way. Your task is to guide your hover tank through a single level complex. However, entrances to rooms are at different levels and you need to plan your route carefully. Although it is infuriating to be able to see a particular goal, you should hold off if need be and keep to your plan.

Progress through the maze is via doors, some of which have barriers. There are keys to unlock them and lift pads to take you to different levels as well as iced walkways to take you around. However, there are also security robots, laser sentinels and dummy keys that will harm you.

At the start of the game you find yourself in an empty room with several exits. One has a laser barrier across it, shoot this and you can enter the next room. Inside this room is your first goal: a pink blob which you have to destroy. It is on a small platform and you need to be slightly raised to shoot it. You can also see another platform on the other side of the room where you have to get to.



Above it is a laser lock with a 'Z' on it. You now need to find the key. But to do this you have to travel the entire maze. The following tips will help you through, but we're not giving too much away, it would spoil the game.

To begin, you don't have to be completely on one of the slideways to stay on it, but

some slideway blocks move! Shoot them and they'll oscillate up and down, you can then either go under them or use them as lifts, but be careful not to be crushed. Shoot them again and they will stop moving. You can also fly by jumping at speed and can easily jump a slideway block gap with no loss of height.

The enemy robots freeze when you shoot them, shoot them again to make them move. Occasionally they can be useful as they can move barrier posts that block you, but this requires careful co-ordination and loss of a certain amount of power.

The three gauges you see on screen indicate power left, time, and ammo. As your power decreases the MGT symbol on screen slowly falls apart, when it is gone you will die. The left gauge is time, but you have so much of it, it's not a problem. The same goes for the right gauge, which is the ammo level. The only problem comes when you shoot the bobby-trapped keys. Some of these will reduce your ammo level, invert your controls, reduce your time or just kill you. So be careful.

A good third of the maze you never have to use, so plan your route carefully as one of the larger red herring areas is also the most difficult and dangerous in the whole maze.

Now you have a good idea of what's going on and a map, what more do you need?

OF THAT!

IKARI WARRIORS

Dave Harrison of Bishop Auckland found that the best way to complete his Amstrad game was to keep to the right with the figure locked forward.

GREEN BERET

A few quick hints. Firstly, Mark Cunningham from County Antrim, Ireland, advises you keep to your weapons until you really need them. Wayne Kotsch, of Victoria in Australia, suggests keeping low to avoid the bullets.

Adding to the international flavour of this hints section we go over to Norway. Kenneth Laugen, from Drobak, has observed that the brown soldiers don't use the ladders in stage one but they do in stages two and three. A good way to kill the green soldiers is to lie on the ground and stab when they're in reach. To kill the brown soldiers on the ground in the second and third stages, lie down and stab them but don't run on too hastily afterwards, there may be mines ahead.

Still with Norway, Torstein Haukyik has the best suggestion of all. From his home in Svarstad he writes to say that when you approach the trucks on level one try to get one of the fast blue soldiers running along behind you and you can then rush to the end of the level without being attacked.

ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE

```
10 FOR I=49152 TO 49220:READ A:C=C+A:POK
E I,A:NEXT I:IF C=7747 THEN PRINT"OK":END
20 PRINT"ERROR IN DATA":END
30 DATA 169,1,169,170,32,186,255,169,0,3
2,189,255,32,213,255,169,96,141,45,9
40 DATA 169,1,141,215,8,162,29,189,39,19
2,157,96,1,202,16,247,76,32,8,120,72
50 DATA 169,76,141,241,69,169,116,141,24
2,69,169,1,141,243,69,104,88,76,0,68
60 DATA 169,165,141,16,16,76,0,12
70 REM AFTER RUN TYPE "SYS 49152" AND PR
ESS RETURN AND PRESS PLAY ON TAPE
```

Also known as *Dragon's Lair II*, the game relies on making the right move at the right time. Bradley Backhouse of Halstead in Essex has been working hard on his hint sheet and wins this month's software prize.

So to complete Doom Dungeon move right, push forward, press fire, press fire, move right, press fire, move left, press fire, pull back, move left, move right and right again to exit.

In the Throne Room push left, move right, press fire, push forward, move left, pull back. A disc of light rotates around the orb, push forward nine times to jump it; each time it gets faster. Next move right and another disc appears, push forward; it appears eight times and travels in the opposite direction to the previous disc. Finally push forward to finish the screen.

On the Mystic Mosaic there are nine different patterns which repeat again and again. The square positioned one up and two to the right of the start square always remain visible.

TERRA CRESTA

Stefan Hendriks lives in Lommel in Belgium and has a few tips for *Terra Cresta* players.

- Don't use the transform mode
- Destroy all base cannon first
- Look carefully at the ocean and you'll see the cannon before they start firing
- Stay close to the second robot but watch out for the planes
- Keep clear of the screen corners
- Destroy the dinosaurs first
- Hit the robots in the centrum

EXPLODING FIST

Steinar Andersen from Kristiansand in Norway gets his tenth dan by punching and kicking low through the game. According to Wyndham Townsend, of Holmfirth, West Yorkshire, after tenth dan all your opponents are ninth dan. Wyndham's battle technique is to somersault to the right corner of the screen and wait for the enemy to come across behind him. Then a backward flip and a quick punch or two will despatch the foe.

1942

Amstrad hot shot Conor Boyle, of Woking in Surrey, suggests that you should try to shoot all the red planes to get the power capsules but forget about the large plane and save your lives for later. He also suggests that the aerobatic manoeuvre is useful over land on level 28.

For C64 owners Neil White, of Edinburgh, has tons of advice. He says the best way to tackle the game is to memorise the patterns of attacking fighters and the order that they come in.

Biplanes are easily dealt with on the first couple of levels but become deadly when they appear with a bomber on later levels. You can't always blast them out of the skies so try not to get bottlenecked with no room to move. If you do then it's almost sure to be curtains for you.

Bombers normally fly vertically up the screen but occasionally two come down either side of the screen, turn inwards and when they meet they fly back off the top of the screen. Bombers have heavy armour and carry side and tail gunners who'll delight in filling your plane full of holes. To dispose of a bomber try to memorise the position that the bomber appears in and fly as close as you dare to that place. When the bomber gets ahead of you nip in behind as soon as you dare and let rip with your cannons — use autofire if you have it. When the bomber is sent blazing towards the ocean mop up any biplanes buzzing around.

Always try for the POWER capsules — you pick them up by flying over them — because you get add-ons for your plane. Occasionally, on picking up a POW, two planes snake down the screen to help you in your battle giving you three times your normal fire power.

THE EIDOLON

Help comes all the way from New Zealand for this one courtesy of Remko de Jong from Whakatane. To kill the dragons you need three red fireballs for the first, four yellow ones for the second and five green ones for the third. Similarly, it takes six blue fireballs for the fourth, seven yellow for dragon number five and eight blue ones for the sixth one. Remko hasn't worked out how to vanquish the next dragon and would appreciate a hint from someone. I bet whatever the colour it'll take nine fireballs!

To kill the music making heads on level five, fire fireballs in the following sequence: red; yellow; green and a final red.

PAPERBOY

Wayne Hosking of Heamoor in Cornwall admits that his high score was a crafty bit of score manipulation using the breakage bonus. First you have to throw a paper to hit a garden ornament — Wayne describes it as a standing-up fish pond. This gives a three point bonus. Next smash a window of a house you were meant to deliver to and your bonus clocks back to 99. When you finish your training course you get $100 \times 99 = 9900$ points. Do this for each day to get massive scores.

Alisdair Russell of Darley Abbey, Derby has a more legitimate hint. When the cars come at you don't try to get back onto the pavement but move to the right hand side of the road instead.

STARQUAKE

Here are 12 of the Teleport codes, if there are any more I'd like to know.

- 1) KWAKE
- 2) ANGOR
- 3) ERCOT
- 4) ANTIO
- 5) VORAX
- 6) ZODIA
- 7) KRANZ
- 8) DULAN
- 9) INDLE
- 10) UPLAN
- 11) ARGOL
- 12) SNOOL

The ACCESS CARD will open all SECURITY DOORS and CHEOPS PYRAMIDS. The KEY will remove all BARRIERS. JOYSTICK gives you an extra BLOB.

Floor creatures, UFOs, Spikes and Eggshells will kill on contact. Generators and some Barriers will only kill if there is an electrical charge flowing through them.

On gaining access to a pyramid you will notice that some objects are white, this means that you are either actually carrying it or it is somewhere about the game, don't bother exchanging for these items unless it is really necessary. On leaving a pyramid you will notice that it disappears so use the pyramids wisely.

CHEAP THRILLS

Title: Mad Nurse
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Firebird
Price: £1.99

This is another of those twee little games that crop up so often on the budget racks. Originally on the C64, this game has made it with relatively few changes onto the humble Speccy.

Mad Nurse is one of those games in which you are snowed under with work and the idea is to keep up with it.

In this game you are the nurse in charge of a children's ward. Nice nurse has just put all the little horrors to bed but they all start crawling out of their cots. You have to prevent them drinking out of the medicine bottles, touching the electronic power points and falling down lift shafts — very gory. Not for the faint hearted this one I can tell you.

You have three trainee nurses to start with and each one is allowed three mishaps before being sacked. However, to help you the hospital has thoughtfully supplied you with stun-gas with which to subdue your rascally charges.

The game is played on three floors of the hospital, the screen display shows them all at the same time. The lift runs down one side of the screen allowing your character access to all floors. The rooms are filled with various bits of furniture and the layout of each room seems to change as each game is played.

The graphics are very good and clear, and the interlude graphics are very good as well: big ugly pictures of nurse showing her in glorious detail — also not for the faint of heart!

The game is actually very simple. All you do is switch between floors, picking up babies and putting them back in their cots — not too many to a cot mind! This actually makes for a very playable and pleasing game believe it or not. Nothing drastic, but it is well worth the money and at last we have that non-destructive game. Needs a bit of strategic thinking too. **MR**

SCORELINE

Impact	55%
Originality	75%
Gameplay	75%
X-Factor	80%

OVERALL 74%



Title: Pneumatic Hammers
Computer: Commodore 64
Supplier: Firebird
Price: £1.99



Pneumatic Hammers is the latest addition to the almost endless list on Firebird's silver label.

You play the part of the intrepid hero Red O'Blair, the famous trouble-shooter, and must save the Lee Valley gold research base which is under threat of total destruction. The electrical power lever has broken off the control box which operates the pneumatic hammers and Red must cast a new one — from gold, before there is a rock slide which will destroy the entire base.

The hammers are installed in pillars in the river bed and are now out of control.

The game starts with a nice little title screen showing a helicopter flying down to the base and landing. The sound of the rotor blades gets softer and softer (a nice touch), then the screen clears and you can choose the game settings. When you're satisfied with these the game starts.

There are six floors to the base and each floor serves a different purpose. The ground floor is where you collect the gold, but first you must collect a metal detector on the first floor. You search the rocks for gold nuggets with this and when you locate one you drop the metal

detector and point to the spot where the gold lies, the gold will then be grabbed by the hand and you must put it into the sack at the bottom of the screen. The gold must then be weighed as only nuggets of 10g, 20, 50g and 100g are pure enough for casting. Then it's off to the furnace where the gold is melted down. The temperature here is maintained by the use of an icon hand and when it reaches the right temperature the gold melts.

But there is a problem — the bridge. It must be maintained by replacing the logs that are hammered into the river using a crane otherwise you'll be out of gold.

Overall *Pneumatic Hammers* has a lot going for it. It has good graphics, an original plot and smooth scrolling, but it can be quite frustrating because of the pixel perfect movement of the icons and might prove too complicated for younger gamers.

SCORELINE

Impact	75%
Originality	80%
Gameplay	45%
X-Factor	50%

OVERALL 60%

Title: Colony
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Bulldog
Price: £2.99

The Earth can no longer cope. The population has exploded and resources are running out. The solution is to colonise distant planets. In order to occupy their time such pleasant tasks as mining ore have been devised to stop the colonising humans from getting too bored.

But not everything on this particular planet is human though. There are lots of aliens trying to break through the fences to eat the crops. Then there is you: a maintenance droid who's job is to keep the nasty aliens out. You must also harvest the crops, repair any damage, order supplies etc. etc. A droid's work is never done.

The action takes place in a large compound. Seven buildings contain everything that you are likely to need — supplies, power, a control centre and three sheds containing fencing. The fences are going to be your major source of trouble. The aliens gnaw them away so quickly that you just can't afford to ignore them or their activities, any aliens that do trespass can be zapped with your trusty laser.

You must also plant the seeds, harvest the mushrooms, replace the solar panels necessary to maintain your energy supply and — if it all proves too much for you — you can fit a battery to the remote droid; he will then start chasing aliens for you.

When you order fresh supplies from Earth, however, a beacon must be activated so that the ship can land at the right place. This drains a considerable amount of energy so don't be too hasty about switching it on.

Colony is an original game with a good mix of action and strategy. The gameplay is nicely balanced so that although when you start you find yourself quickly over-run with aliens it is not too difficult to improve. Excellent value for money.

SCORELINE

Impact	65%
Originality	80%
Gameplay	70%
X-Factor	75%

OVERALL 73%

Title: Rasterscan
Computer: Amstrad
Supplier: Mastertronic
Price: £1.99

This game makes me think somebody took one look at the Amiga's bouncing ball program and thought: 'That would make a good game'.

The game is actually an arcade adventure based on the shifting room-to-room principle. There are the usual variety of tasks to perform too. All this is made that much harder by the inclusion of inertia which makes controlling the ball that much more difficult.

The idea is that you are repairing the starship *Rasterscan*. The aforementioned bouncing ball is, in fact, a maintenance robot. Your job in fixing the craft is made more difficult because you have to do so before it burns up in the heart of a star.

To accomplish this you have to fix the fuel pipes to fix the generators to fix the engines to fix the ship in general. You then have to work out how to fly it.

As you travel through the hull there are various items of equipment to use and repair. There is even a tape deck to repair. Once this is done your current position can then be saved.

The graphics are up to scratch as are the sound effects and music. The multi-coloured mode is used so, whilst objects are a little chunky for my taste, they are at least colourful. A reasonable game this that is good value for money. **MR**

SCORELINE

Impact	75%
Originality	30%
Gameplay	55%
X-Factor	40%

OVERALL 50%

Title: Rasterscan
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Mastertronic
Price: £1.99

Rasterscan, a large spaceship, has been damaged after a skirmish and is now drifting dangerously towards a star. It is imperative that it be repaired as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, the ship wasn't the only thing damaged during the attack. The repair robot, MSB, lost most of its programs and is only capable of servicing toasters now. The question is do you have the necessary extra brain power to get everything shipshape again?

Described as an animated adventure without text, *Rasterscan* puts you in control of MSB as you attempt to repair the damaged items. The game claims that no arcade skills are required and this is largely true, but the MSB is a large bouncing sphere which steadfastly refuses to go where you want it to. So, delete Mastertronic's wonderful description and insert 'arcade adventure'.

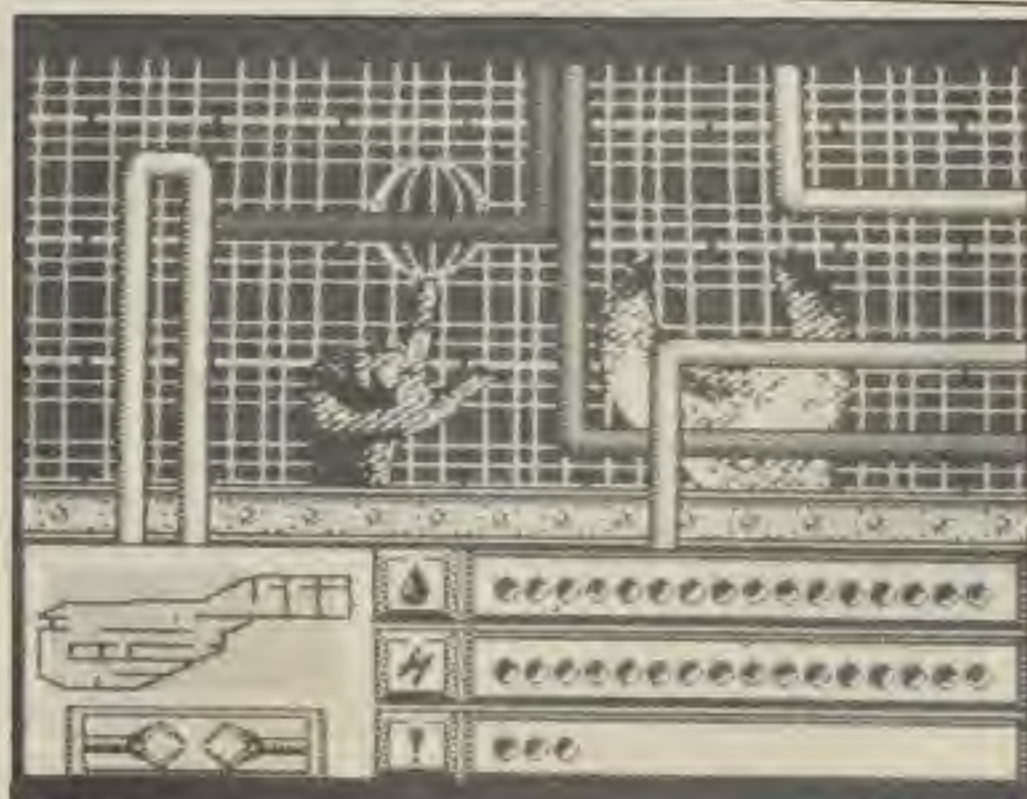
The MSB can teleport items for you so it is a case of picking up an object, working out where you want to put it and then re-locating it. Once repaired, objects then become functional and you must decide how best to use them. Typical problems include repairing the generator, engines and scanners and working out how to get through locked doors.

The game is similar in style to hundreds of others — find an object and discover how to use it! The bouncing ball I found to be intensely frustrating and added nothing to the gameplay. Even at a budget price, I found nothing in *Rasterscan* to recommend it.

SCORELINE

Impact	40%
Originality	50%
Gameplay	30%
X-Factor	30%

OVERALL 38%



Title: Think
Computer: Amstrad
Supplier: Firebird
Price: £1.99

This game was originally produced by Ariolasoft, was written by RamJam, designed by Tigress, from an original idea by somebody unknown, and is loosely based around *Connect Four*. Now Firebird get in on the act by re-releasing it at a budget price.

The game concept is very simple: two players take it in turns to introduce counters onto a checkered board, when four of one colour are all in a line that player wins.

If this sounds a bit too much *Connect Four* don't worry, it isn't because there is one big addition. Instead of dropping counters in

from the top of the frame, counters are pushed on from anywhere on the far right column or bottom row. The action of pushing a counter serves to shunt any counters already on that row or column along one.

All this takes a while to get used to, but after a while you work all the common gambits out and things become quite enjoyable. The game has a self-teaching mode where you can play the computer and it gives you suggestions and a percentage score depending on how good your move was.

Everything is icon controlled and the horrid little icon pictures appear all over the screen at various times. Joystick or keyboard are used. The joystick is better for selecting icons, the keyboard for actually playing the game — this is because the columns and rows are labelled with letters and numbers.

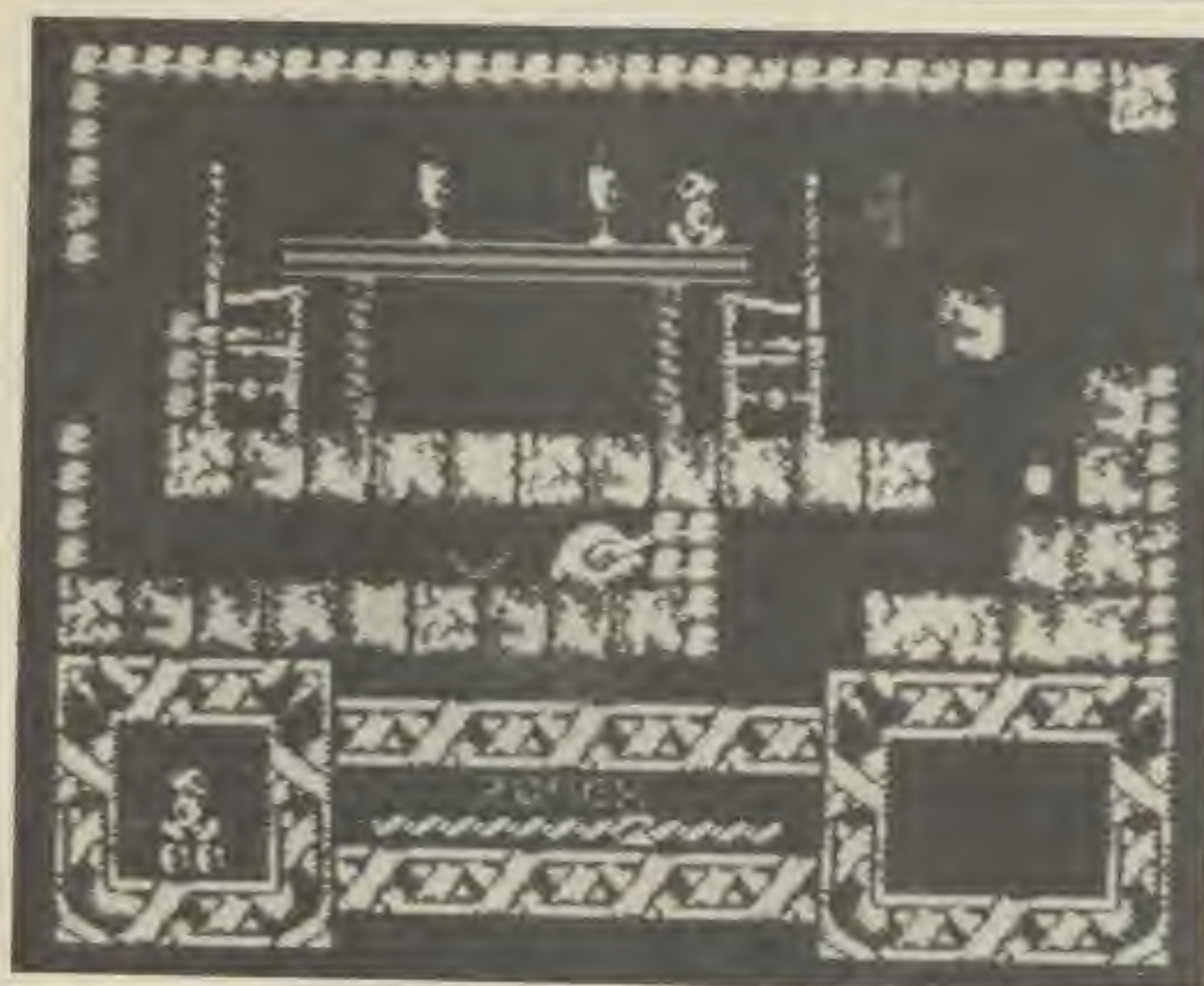
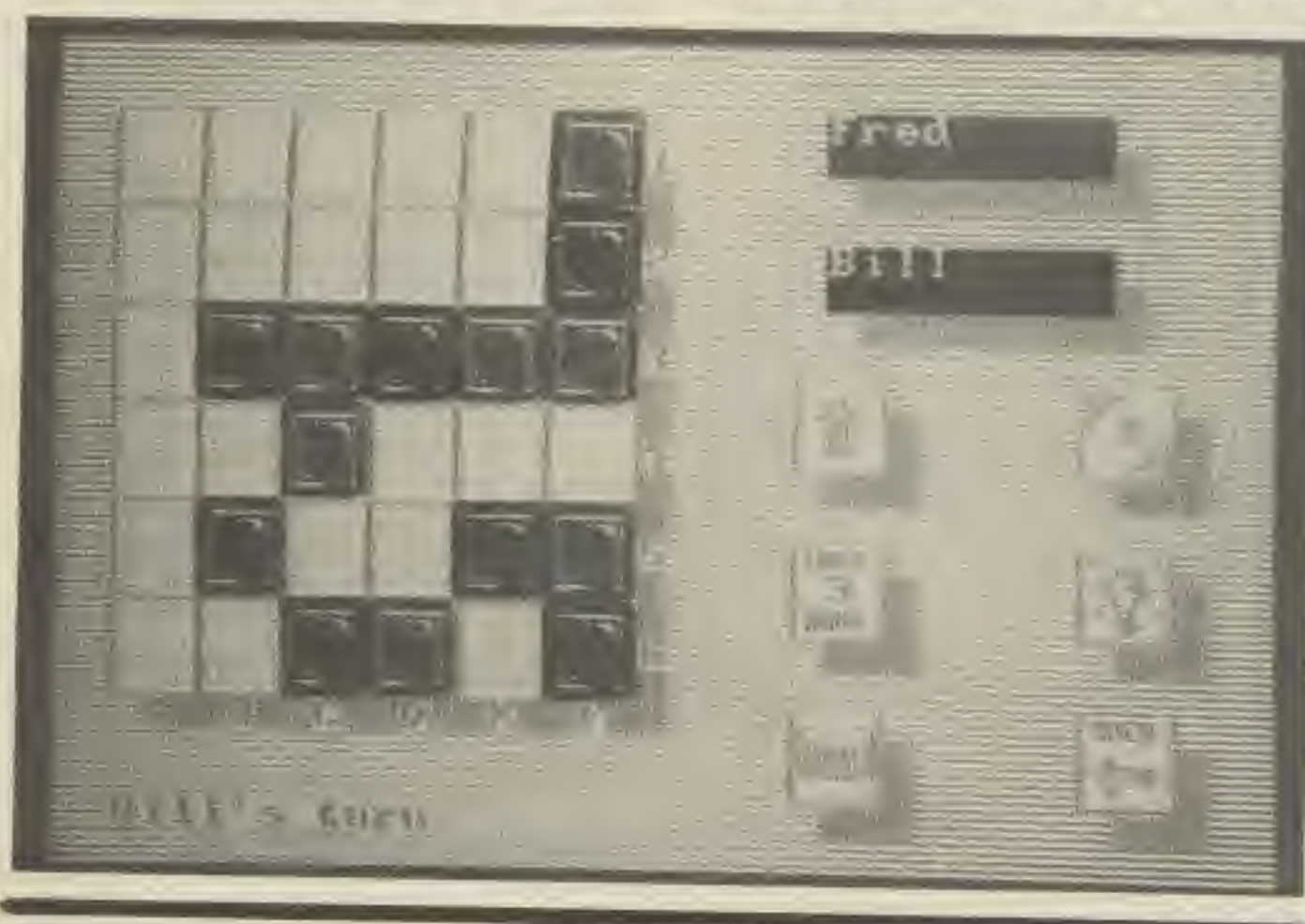
All the usual chess options are included: (including six pre-set problems), reviewing; timers; take-back; suggestions and a printer option.

Altogether a well thought out variation on an old game and well worth two quid. **MR**

SCORELINE

Impact	80%
Originality	50%
Gameplay	85%
X-Factor	85%

OVERALL 75%



Title: Vampire
Computer: C64
Supplier: Code Masters
Price: £1.99

The year is 2987. Brok the Brave (that's you) has ended up on a high security planet. His only way out is to accept a mission that will bring him face to face with Dracula and his vampires.

This ancient Transylvanian toothed horror is still terrorising the Earth and its space stations too. To defeat him Brok must first descend into the depths of Dracula's castle.

The castle consists of 95 rooms packed with energy draining critters and traps. The rooms are built from a series of platforms that our hero can leap around in his attempt to collect the five keys that will unlock the way to six magical shutters that when opened lead to the surface and a hammer, stake and cross. Brok will then have the means with which to destroy Dracula who you must meet in a final jet-pack powered confrontation in deep space.

However, few people will get as far as this in this multi-screen platform game as it is horrendously difficult. Any mis-timed jump or wrong step will plummet you down a chasm or a well that you just can't escape from. This is particularly unfair when it happens in room 94! To add to your troubles you are consistently hassled by skulls, monsters and arrow traps that whittle away your life power and bring the game to an abrupt end — you get only one chance in this game.

A real challenge this game but I doubt anyone will be good enough — or bothered enough — to play it through.

SCORELINE

Impact	55%
Originality	40%
Gameplay	45%
X-Factor	55%

OVERALL 49%



Title: Lazerwheel
Computer: C64
Supplier: Mastertronic
Price: £1.99

A game involving pure hand-eye co-ordination, this. *Lazerwheel* is a sort of variation on the original *Space Invaders* but folded round in a circle(!) What's that mean? Well, the circle represents one sector of an eight-sectored hyperspace causeway. Well, I suppose it had to be called something.

In the centre of this circular playing area sits your rotatable laser cannon. This threatens the periphery of the wheel, where a selection of coloured blocks rotate. They also have, for the most part, the most malevolent intentions in their limited block-type brains.

The block to be watched though is the red one. It's a bomb. It progresses from pink to white, then detonates, inflicting damage on the game sector, which may ultimately be rendered *hors de combat*, or out of action. The red needs therefore to be shot on sight. Other blocks are harmless, but it helps to shoot them too — hitting greens reduces sector damage, while hitting brown gives you a score bonus. There are others too, but the important thing is *not* to shoot grey blocks. These are created when you miss and are nasty things as they reflect subsequent shots back at you causing you to lose a life.

The game gets very panic-making as you jump from sector to sector, trying to prevent terminal damage. Gameplay is fairly addictive, but the game scores more points for originality and simplicity of concept, so much so I'm surprised the idea hasn't been taken up before.

FF

SCORELINE

Impact	30%
Originality	80%
Gameplay	60%
X-Factor	50%

OVERALL 55%

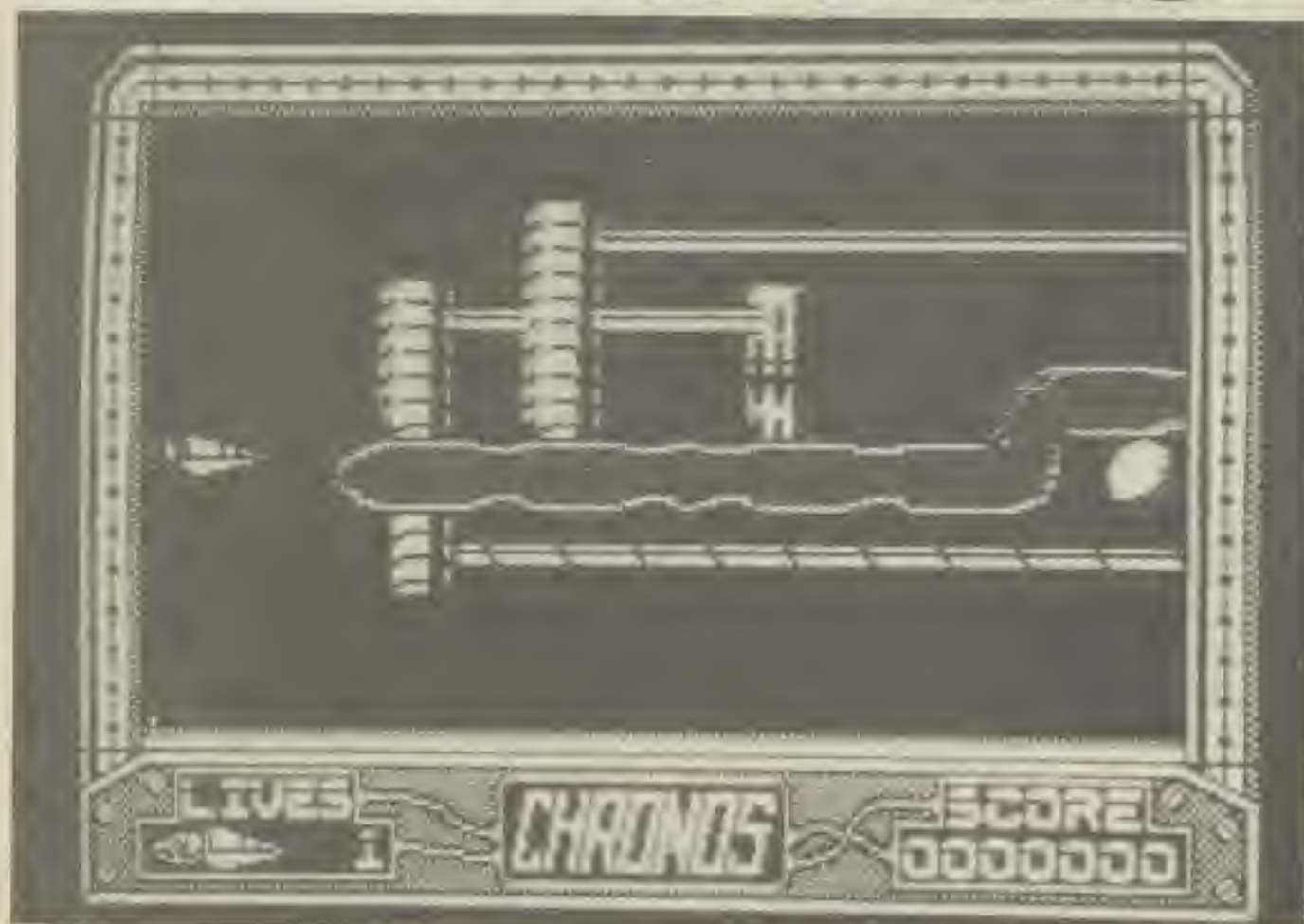
The graphics scroll smoothly — no mean feat on the Amstrad — and are flicker-free, steady as a rock even. Gameplay is good and the game has all the trappings of a good zap 'em without being too pretentious.

My only gripes are that only three of the Amstrad's four colours are used — very wasteful. Also, an autofire jammer has been put into the program — spoilsports!

Not a bad game and a sight for sore eyes as far as zap 'em Amstrads are concerned.

MR

CHEAP THRILLS



Title: Chronos
Computer: Amstrad
Supplier: Mastertronic
Price: £1.99

Another all-action zap 'em game, but this time the game is *actually* rather good.

The instructions, however, drone on a bit all about Mystical Dimension Weavers, the seven Ruling Lords and poor entrapped Chronos.

The instructions also go on to say that this has absolutely nothing to do with the game which is about shooting groups of eight pixels at much larger conglomerations of pixels in the hope of amassing a huge score.

The game uses horizontal scrolling in the same way as *Scramble* and is monochrome.

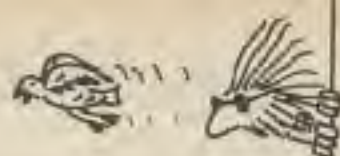
There is actually a blue border around the screen, but as the predominant shade is a lurid yellow I feel justified in calling it monochrome. But it does use the four colour mode of the Amstrad so all the graphics are nice and sharp without any of that horrid chunkiness that 167 colours would have produced.

As you fly your craft through the six different levels — the screen does actually change colour when you move up a stage, all manner of nasties try to do you great harm.

SCORELINE

Impact	85%
Originality	50%
Gameplay	75%
X-Factor	85%

OVERALL 77%



Title: Armourdillo
Computer: C64
Supplier: Code Masters
Price: £1.99

At last, the aliens get a look in. *Armourdillo's* one slight claim to originality is that the crazed, homicidal, power-hungry geeks from outer space are *humans*! And it's the cute, peace-loving Mobantians who are fighting off man. Just as it would be in real life I suspect.

Having said that, there isn't really very much to recommend this game over a million others. It's a typical competent but lacklustre smooth-scroller, with a few wacky sprites à la Minter thrown in. The aim of the game is to rescue batches of fellow Mobantians from left screen and deliver them to salvation — which is about 2,000 pixels to the right. In the meantime, assorted thingoids must be dodged or shot; these include giant nuts and bolts and general amorphous lumps.

The landscape hasn't got much to recommend it either. Frame one is fine, lots of sinister, lasciviously winking eyes in the background — but what reward to you reap for getting to frame two? A bunch of Mobantian slag-heaps is what. I made my excuses and left.

FF

SCORELINE

Impact	40%
Originality	40%
Gameplay	50%
X-Factor	30%

OVERALL 40%

Title: Tubaruba
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Firebird Silver
Price: £1.99

Have you a reputation for truancy, never doing your homework, getting into fights and sticking gum in all the wrong places? If so, you could be Tubaruba the hero of Firebird's latest game.

Up to now you've avoided real trouble but now the headmaster's caught you breaking a window. He gives you an option. Either recover the £50 to pay for the window's repair or be expelled! The headmaster's so confident you'll fail that he's bet his red Ferrari on it!

Your quest to recover the cash is remarkably hazardous. A host of missiles, octopusses, birds and people are out to stop you collecting the pound notes and coins

strewn around the game screens. Contact with any of these nasty critters drains your energy, but it can be replenished by collecting cans of coke. In addition, you can even hitch a frantic ride through the game on a Sinclair C5! However, besides this odd little diversion the game has little new to offer, but for £1.99 it's worth a look.

SCORELINE

Impact	45%
Originality	35%
Gameplay	45%
X-Factor	55%

OVERALL 45%



Title: Super Robin Hood
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Code Masters
Price: £1.99

The Sheriff of Nottingham has captured Maid Marion and is holding her in his castle in an attempt to trap Robin Hood. Bravely, our hero rushes to her aid oblivious of the dangers.

The game begins once Robin has crossed the moat and entered the castle. He must now battle his way past beastly animals and crossbow-firing guards to the east tower where his beloved Marion is locked up. But to get that far he — ie you — will need skill, timing and quick reactions to get past the castle's many hazards.

As in another Code Masters game, *Ghost Hunters*, you must collect objects (keys) to activate lifts, hearts, to win back Marion, and tablets to restore your health — you start out a healthy 99 but get less healthy with each contact with the nasties and the crossbows.

When faced with a crossbow-firing guard you have to time your retaliatory shots so that you can hit him but duck down beneath his bolts at the same time. With a little practice you should be able to take care of the guards which leaves the lifts, traps, indestructible sword-waving soldiers and creeping critters.

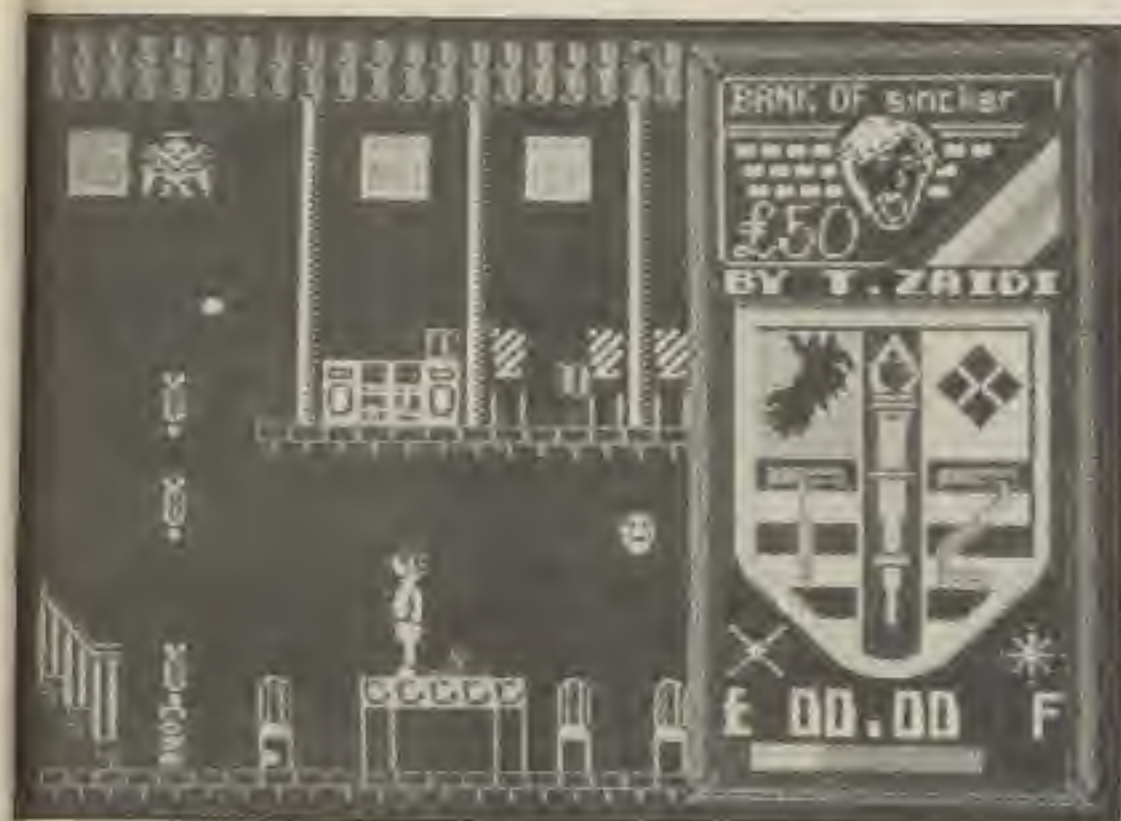
This is a good game. The impressive animation is similar in style to *Ghost Hunters*. However, given the choice, I'd opt for the former as I prefer spook smashing.

SCORELINE

Impact	55%
Originality	60%
Gameplay	65%
X-Factor	60%

OVERALL 60%

CHEAP THRILLS



Title: P.O.D. (Proof of Destruction)
Computer: C64
Supplier: Mastertronic
Price: £1.99

Arcade greats never die — in fact it looks as though they don't even fade away. *P.O.D.* is at heart a *Centipede* clone minus the mushrooms. It also has elements of Jeff Minter's early classic, *Grid Runner*.

You control a small laser cannon — the P.O.D. of the title — which can be moved around the screen on a matrix of grid wires — it only fires upwards. Various multi-coloured alien sprites enter from stage left, right and top and do worrying things like shoot at you. Naturally, one must vapourise the little sods. Unfortunately, in their death throes they tear large gaps in the grid matrix. These grow back eventually but meanwhile can restrict your freedom of movement. Well, that's all there is to it really.

Although there is much variation in sprite shape and style of movement from frame to frame, this game has no pretensions to being anything more than a simple get-em-before-they-get-you. Shaun Southern, Mastertronic's prolific programmer, supplies refreshingly unhypey sleeve notes. Strategy, Shaun? "There is none". Fair enough, but the odd thing is I actually found the game rather addictive. Nostalgia, maybe. **FF**

SCORELINE

Impact	15%
Originality	15%
Gameplay	75%
X-Factor	75%

OVERALL 45%

Title: Ghost Hunters
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Code Masters
Price: £1.99

It all started when Professor Twilight offered a reward to anyone who could clear Nightmare Mansion of its spooks and ghouls. Of course, Chuck Studbuckle took up the challenge. That was three days ago and he hasn't been seen since. Now you, Brad Studbuckle, have to go into this house of horrors to find your brother.

You enter the house through the front door and start looking for Chuck, confident that you can fry any spooks with your sub-compact anti-matter phantom splatter. Unfortunately, nothing has prepared you for the horrors that lie ahead. Skeletons and vampires rise from the floor in front of you, hands appear to grab you and ghosts and deadly spiders block your path. You can blast them with your splatter gun but you have to be quick as their evil presence drains your energy.

The gun sight can be controlled either by

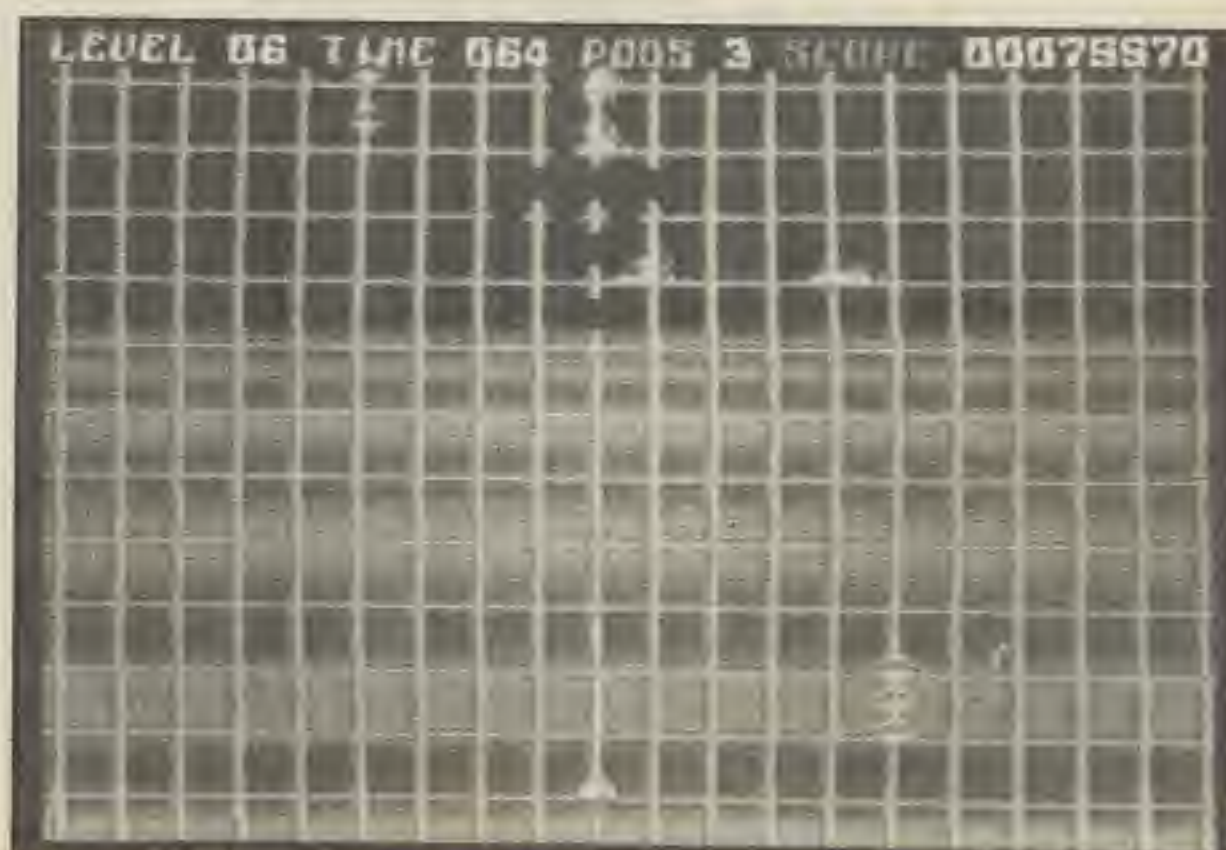
moving the joystick with the button pressed or by a second player who can splat the spooks while you find your way through the lifts and platforms that lead to flashing objects. These objects are vital as they activate other lifts that will let you explore more of the house and maybe even find your brother.

Ghost Hunters is a great game that just oozes atmosphere from the cleverly animated monsters to David Whittaker's eerie music. It's another platform, but it's originality and atmospheric enough to capture the imagination.

SCORELINE

Impact	85%
Originality	75%
Gameplay	65%
X-Factor	75%

OVERALL 75%



Competition winners have been kept on the edge of their seats for too long...

Ten lucky entrants were right on the ball when it came to our Footballer of the Year competition last September.

The ten winners listed below struck lucky — theirs were the first correct entries we received so they have won, not only a copy of the great Gremlin game, but a football too. However, Gamer is nothing if not generous and 40 runners-up, also listed below, won a copy of the game.

Winners were as follows: David Colquitt, Isle of Man. **Alistair May**, Moray, Scotland. **Mr T O'Connor**, London. **Paul Davies**, Luton, Beds. **Robert Lewis**, Wolverhampton, West Midlands. **P Rance**, Essex. **Ronan Donnelly**, Belfast, N. Ireland. **Simon Kennedy**, Milton Keynes, Bucks. **Steven McGregor**, Aylesbury, Bucks. **G J Simpson**, Dalkeith.

Runners-up were: **Peter Lipscombe**, Sunbury on Thames, Middx. **Andrew McMurdo**, New Biggin By Sea, Northumberland. **Terry Crook**, Killinghall, Harrogate. **Michael Hood**, Old Trafford, Manchester. **Martin Owen**, Caernarvon, Gwynedd. **David Rose**, Sale, Cheshire. **A D Thompson**, Hartlepool, Cleveland. **S Dobson**, Romford, Essex. **K Hollins**, Leicester. **Gary Holland**, Barnehurst, Kent. **Clive Lindus**, Littlehampton, Sussex. **Lisa Hadcock**, Urmston, Manchester. **Michael Cruikshank**, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, Scotland. **Terry Baron**, Belton, near Doncaster, South Yorkshire. **R A Coles**, Sevenoaks, Kent. **Steven Howard**, Lowestoft, Suffolk. **Dominic Batchelor**, London N1. **C S Birch**, Netheravon, Wilts. **Darren Page**, London EC1. **Matthew J Rowley**, Whitchurch, Cardiff. **S J Critchley**, Islington, London. **Mark T Kelly**, Oxton, Birkenhead, Merseyside. **Mark Thomas**, Llanelli, Dyfed. **Jason McBurnie**, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire. **Andrew Barber**, Beckenham, Kent. **Lasse Eldrup**, Hvidovre, Denmark. **Allan Hardess**, Penarth, South Glam. **Fiona A Chalmers**, Morayshire, Scotland. **Richard Porter**, Chislehurst, Kent. **Stephen Richards**, Farnborough, near Orpington, Kent. **Kieron Duckworth**, Hapton, near Burnley, Lancs. **Simon Maskell**, Crawley, Sussex. **Craig Keevney**, Partington, near Urmston, Manchester. **James O'Donnell**, Redditch, Worts. **Peter Waldie**, Swansea, West Glam. **Steven Nassau**, Beeston, Nottingham. **Alan Watkins**, Clacton on Sea, Essex. **N Cole**, Bognor Regis, West Sussex. **D Hand**, London SE23. **Peter P Spears**, Belgrave, Tamworth.



KNUCKLE-BUSTERS

There were a good many variations on the theme of 'Knuckle City' entered as possible names for the city on which this game is based. Most of them quickly found their way into the waste-paper bin. Our vote for the best name went to Queensberry from D D Horler of Gwent, so that's who the track-suit goes to.

Ordinary prizes — of the Knucklebuster game (what's ordinary about such a prize? — Ed) go to runners up: **Peter Spark**, Newcastle-on-Tyne; **James Griffiths**, Clwyd; **Paul Westgate**, Norwich; **Steven Bramley**, Sheffield; **Adrian McDonald**, Swansea; **A Dalli**, Vauxhall, London; **Wayne Styles**, Salford; **Robert Hamer**, Harrow; **Martin Owen**, Caernarvon; **Michael McDougall**, South Shields; **Mick Croft**, Lancaster; **David Stubbs**, Montenegro, Co. Cork; **Robert Lapham**, Sevenoaks; **Eugene Morgan**, Crossgar; **Neil White**, Edinburgh; **T Roach**, Eaglescliffe; **Paul Walford**, Newport Pagnall; **Mark Horstead**, Southampton; **Ian Lawson**, Swansea and **Jonathan Cale**, Exeter.

TRAPDOOR

You lot certainly got your teeth into our cookery competition, didn't you!

Gamer cooked up a little comp last October, the idea of which was to come up with some gruesome grub for Berk, the Thing Upstairs and hungry monster in Piranha's Trapdoor game.

Well, your recipes certainly had culinary bite. In fact, we were worried some of them might bite Berk back. Have all Gamer's cookery buffs been to the Roald Dahl School of Cookery?

The Golden Slug Award for the best recipe must go to Rodney Tregale, however, despite strong competition. His entry wasn't the nastiest, but it was the most original. Rodney actually broadcast his recipe from Radio Piranha — the station with bite (!)

We joined Piranha for the Recipe of the Day just before the latest edition of the station's daily soap, Rogue Trooper, in which Rogue leaves his Albert Road bedsit and walks through Coronation Square to visit the Brook Motel!

Pumpkin Surprise was the recipe. A simple little dish, its ingredients include: pumpkin; iron filings; mushy peas; rust; tar; three

types of ice cream, strawberry, chocolate and mint; ten marbles and a bucket of liquid oxygen!

You split the pumpkin and stuff one half with all the ingredients except the ice cream, marbles and liquid oxygen. This first half you bake in a furnace for several days, then serve hot and, boy, do you get a surprise! The second half is filled with ice cream and marbles and left to chill in the liquid oxygen. Serve cold and, boy, do you get a surprise.

Nice one, Rodders.

We also liked Lee Ward's Slug Suffle (!) This unusual dish includes slugs, lizard's eggs, tadpoles, frog spawn and sweet and sour grasshoppers (!) To garnish sprinkle gorilla's toe nails. Basically, you mix the disgusting mush up and cook for 20 minutes at Gas Mark Four. Yeuck! Remind us not to come to your house for tea Lee.

The two other recipes Gamer thought might appeal to Berk were Darryl Webster's Slug and Nits Blood Casserole. The only snag with this one was that we thought Berk's friends might get a bit fed-up with him knicking all their nits — the recipe calls for 20 hair lice, the blood of which has to be squeezed out and added to the boiled slugs!

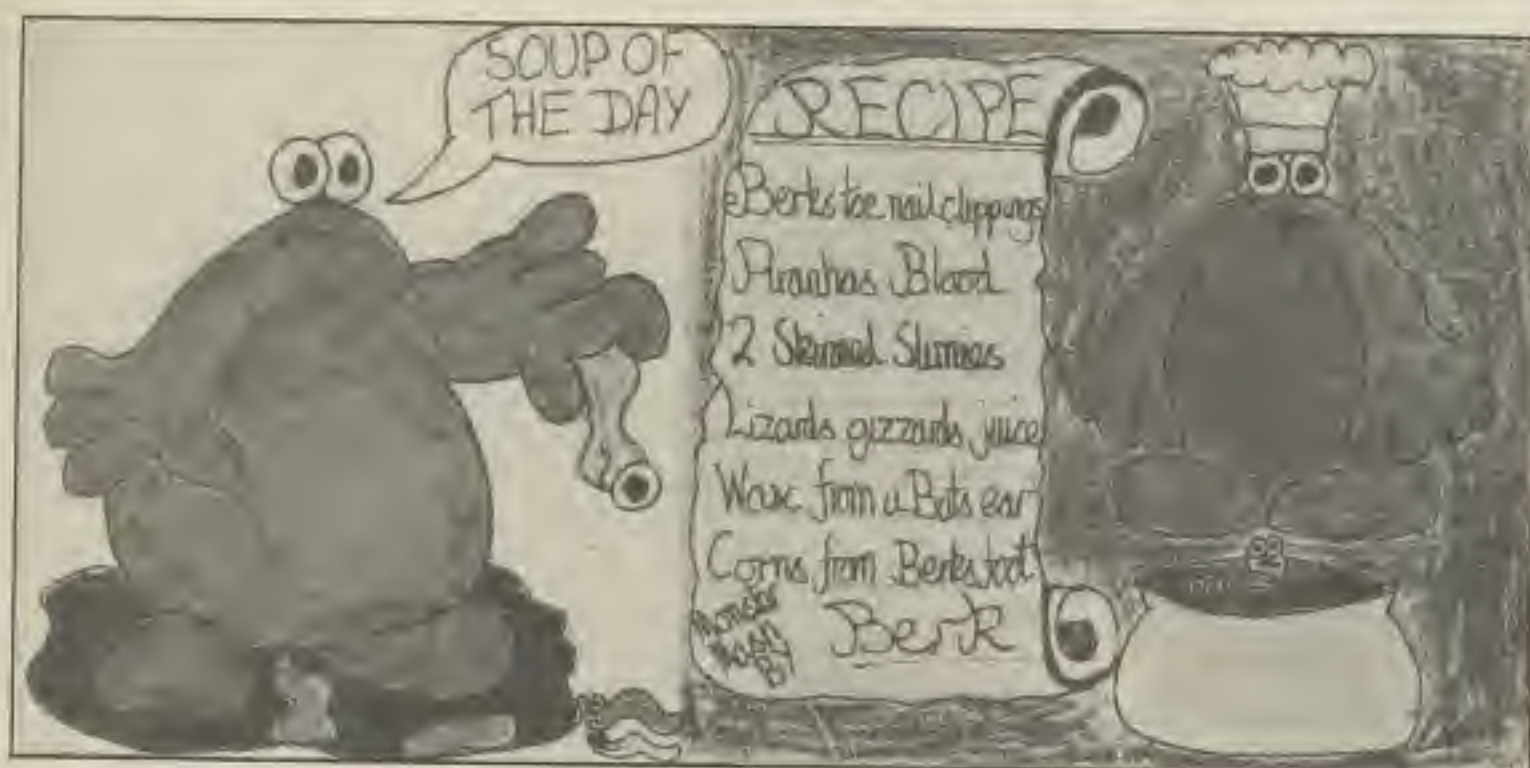
Last but not least there was

Steve Lee's Chunder Chowder which needs no explanation.

Here are the winners of Gamer's first — and probably last — cookery competition. They all win copies of the great Trapdoor game.

Steve Lee, from Huntingdon; **Lee Ward**, from Grays in Essex; **Rodney Tregale**, from Slough; **Darryl Webster**, from Leeds; **Robert Johnston**, from Barnley; **Ms G B Kitchener**, from Leicester; **R Jones**, from Belfast; **Roger Lloyd**, from Wilmslow, Cheshire; **Ross Laird**, from Galashiels, Scotland; **Darrell Timms**, from Sheffield; **James Earl**, from Harrow, Middx; **Chris Speck**, from Beverley, Humberside; **Alison Bakes**, from Stockton on Tees, Cleveland; **D S Walker**, from Ashford, Middx; **R J Spencer**, from South Benfleet, Essex; **Terry Harrington**, from Southend on Sea, Essex; **Gareth Cornell**, from Aylesbury, Bucks; **Shaun Hill**, from Faversham, Kent; **Antony Hill**, from Faversham, Kent; **Richard Hughes**, from Stockport, Cheshire; **Kevin Cooper**, from Middlesbrough; **Liz Walten**, from Hornsey, London; **Stephen Martin**, from Palmers Green, London and **Peter Wright**, from Wimbourne, Dorset.

COMPETITION RESULTS



SUPER SUNDAY

There were only six teams hidden in the word square. Good though *Backsliders* and *Creators of Chaos* might be as team names, they aren't actual teams. Most people knew that the *Yankees* (or even the *New York Yankees*) are not a football team but a baseball team. But a surprising number missed the *Rams* and the *Patriots*.

The full list of teams is: *Rams*; *Bears*; *Patriots*; *Steelers*; *Redskins* and *Dolphins*.

The winner of the competition is Simon Grant, of London SW19. He will be sent a real American football and a *Miami Dolphins* team shirt.

Runners up are: **Brian Jackson**, Leicester; **A Thorpe**, Seaham; **Andrew Jackson**, North

Cheam; **C McCormack**, Barmouth; **Lewis Slater**, London W9; **David Hines**, London N5; **Martin Garside**, Nottingham; **Stephen Gelderd**, Leeds; **Graham Turner**, Oldham; **Graham Clarke**, the 1st Battalion Royal Scots; **Richard Taylor**, Mansfield; **Martin Saxton**, Sheffield; **Paul Wright**, Eastbourne; **John Rowson**, Aylesbury; **Steve Ellis**, Gosport; **Alan Boyle**, Airdrie; **Dean Marsden**, Nottingham; **Martin Walker**, Leeds; **S Higginson**, Mansfield; **Glen Schild**, Frome; **A Wilson**, Middle Wallop; **P Stevenson**, Meopham; **David McGuire**, Warrington and **Rob Lansberry**, Wellingborough. They will all be sent a copy of the game.

KONIX SPEED KING

We've got to admit that this was one of the easiest comps we've ever run. Anyone who didn't think Mike ought to use joystick 2 and was therefore an ace should rate themselves a duffer and go and buy one of the duffer mags...

The winners, drawn from the editor's largest hat, were: **A Salisbury**, Clacton on Sea; **John Savory**, Northampton; **Andy Tang**, London N1; **Peter Hancock**, Lifton; **Gareth Sudin**, Thamesmead; **David Goodson**, Cardiff; **Chaz Lawrence**, Spalding; **Anthony Trow**, Derby; **Mark Gell**, Clacton on Sea and **J R Gamman**, Swanscombe.



ACADEMY

We were unpleasantly surprised by the large number of words readers managed to come up with from *Tau Ceti Academy*. To stand any chance of winning, you had to have more than 160 words; the most claimed by any entrant was 233 from Colm Andrew from Cheshire. And, although we're unsure where he'd found a few of his 'words', his was still among the top entries.

Some entrants must have spent all their evenings poring over the multi-volume *Oxford English Dictionary* to find their words. We were surprised by how few readers used a computerised entry. With a random word generator and a spell-checker, you should be able to turn out a good long list — though some of the words found were so way-out that they probably would not feature in smaller spelling checker programs. How many of you know what an amice is, for instance? Or perhaps *Gamer* readers think they don't need spell-checkers — we've got news for you...

The full list of winners is as follows: **Colm Andrew**, Cheshire; **J Gilbert** and **G E Gilbert**, Watford; **Mick Beckett**, Rotherham; **Neil Talbott**, Bromsgrove and **Jonathan Holt**, Saltash; all found over 200 words.

Other winners are: **Nick Reeves**, Millom; **Deryck Pritchard**, Silloth; **Gillian Lee**, Berwick-on-Tweed; **Ricardo Nardini**, Troon; **Jo Chatterton**, Hull; **Tony Arnold**, Derby; **David Gallacher**, Dundee; **A Thorpe**, Seaham; **J Smith**, Southampton; **Lisa Hadcock**, Urmston; **B Morris**, Rochdale; **S J Lee**, Ramsey; **Greig McKenzie**, Edinburgh and **J Tymuczko**, Hemswell.

Commiserations go to all the other entrants, most of whom found over 100 words and must have spent ages on this one. Better luck next time!

Oh yes, an amice is a religious cap, hood or cape. But what is a tucum?



BULGE



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WAR ON! PRICES!



Three games for little more than the price of one can't be bad, eh! And the three Argus Press Software games on offer aren't 'alf bad either. They include *Legions of Death*, an historical number concerning the Punic Wars. You play the Carthaginians in this territorial war game. Simple icon control makes it a game for new and old hands.

The second game is the *Battle of the Bulge*. A strategy game set in the Second World War, you can play against the computer or another person, but whoever you play Argus promises it won't be an easy fight.

Last but not least, there is *Johnny Reb II*, the follow-up to *Johnny Reb*. Another war game for you computer warmongers out there, this one takes the Battle of Bull Run for its setting — this took place on July 21, 1861. A strong Confederate force is trying to cross a small creek in this game and if you're not fast that's where you'll end up — up the creek.

If you bought these games separately they would cost you £9.95 each! **Gamer** is offering them to readers for a mere £12.95 — a saving of £16!!!

The games are available for the Spectrum and Commodore. And remember, if you like this little lot keep your eyes open for more Argus specials in the future.

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R GAMER EVIEW

Title: Cyborg
Computer: C64
Supplier: CRL
Price: £9.95 (cass);
£14.95 (disk)

It is the year 2087. A seven man team has been sent out to investigate an asteroid that's on collision course with Earth. It took them 31 days on travel in the space ship Strata to the asteroid, called Avenius. Five days later contact with the team is lost, so someone had to go after them and find out what happened but the mission was too dangerous for a man so they sent the Cyborg.

You are the Cyborg, a half human, half robotic killing machine. Your self-generating metal skin protects your armoured central body, blood control and disease elimination system, and synthetic muscle control units. On your right wrist is a heavy-duty particle beam disruptor complete with built-in nuclear power supply, the other wrist houses your computer control panel.

The screen display shows your control panel at the bottom of the screen below a 3D view of Cyborg and his current location. As the game begins Cyborg is in the control centre of his Gal Corps ship. The panel consists of a series of keys that can be accessed any time by pressing F1. Now you can check your inventory, hold the game, check your shield and power unit status, scan the area, reload your weapons, get objects and collect information on the creatures you meet.

You check the mission details on your ship's terminal before leaving. Being a Cyborg you don't have to worry about breathing apparatus and can happily walk on the asteroid's surface. You soon find the scientists' ship and examine their computer. A message appears in your panel screen warning you that the asteroid isn't an asteroid but a disguised ship full of angry aliens! A few yards on from the ship you find the entrance to the aliens' base.

The entrance is actually a lift that goes down to three levels, although you soon find out there's more. The lift opens out into a



At last, Cyborg is here! But was it worth the wait? Tony Heath finds out.

CYBORG





corridor patrolled by a peculiar selection of creatures who all seem to take an instant dislike to you. They slow this by firing laser bolts at you (which soon wear away your armor) and will kill you if you don't do something about it. You could blast them away but since your weapons bay only holds three they have to be reloaded. The only alternative is to dive for weapons. To get through this you will have to

examine the mechanism that will reveal a coded console and enter the right entry code. Luckily the first level code is provided in the scientists' message and the other codes can be got out of the computers that you'll find scattered around the base.

You'll also find various objects including more weapons — such as a 50 shot light rifle — to light your way through to the scientists.

Cyborg isn't an easy game to master and it will cost you several Cyborgs before you're through the first level so it's just as well you can load and save your progress. You can delve deeper immediately from the lift but the reception committee is consisting of armed troops, bouncing blobs, flying ovals and ambulating aliens, ensure silly men are very quickly squashed, otherwise you will be!

Cyborg features excellent graphics, particularly the room interiors and the model collection of animated aliens. The panel is easy to control — although a spine bar instead of a P1 would have been even easier — as is Cyborg himself. You'll soon be diving through doors and blasting aliens, but it'll take weeks before you'll stand a chance of completing the game.



SCORELINE

Impact	85%
Originality	75%
Gameplay	85%
X-Factor	80%

OVERALL

81%

Title: Ball Breaker
Computer: Amstrad
Supplier: CRL
Price: £8.95

Ball Breaker is the name of the game, although it's more of a nerve wrecker! CRL is the latest in a long line of companies to produce a game based on old faithful, *Breakout*.

First a re-cap for all those young bloods who were elsewhere (like hiding in a cave in Ulan Bator) in the seventies when games of this type were all the rage. It all started with Nolan Bushnell's game, *Pong* — you know, two bats and a ball bouncing around the screen. The game was loosely based on table tennis and was just about all the technology of the time could handle.

A short while later the first *Breakout* machine appeared on the scene — a simple twist paddle arrangement controlled a moving bat at the base of the screen. A ball bounced around knocking out bricks in a wall above you and the game ended when your balls ran out.

This was hailed as a great advance in video game technology: simple and easy to understand for the non-technological public — and completely mind numbing; but remember this is before *Space Invaders*.

A number of variations on the theme appeared and the game gained in popularity until, as better things came along, it faded into obscurity. It cropped up on an Atari VCS cartridge about 10 years ago and on some of the crude late seventies home-built computers.

However, this was not forgotten. In the hyped up high speed, high tech world of the video game old ideas are never forgotten merely recycled.

Breakout was turned into a new high-tech paddle/bricks/bouncing ball game called *Arkanoid*. It caused a sensation in the arcades and as we all known good coin-op games eventually end up as computer games.

BALL BREAKER



At last a bit of originality as Ball Breaker goes 3D

Ball Breaker is one of a number of games based on *Breakout* but given a re-working. But *Ball Breaker* is the furthest from the original idea and, dare, I say it, the best, or at least the most challenging of all such games I have come across.

To start with it is in 3D. What would normally be the vertical playfield of *Breakout* screen is now horizontal, with the view being taken from slightly above one corner.

The bat runs up and down one edge and the ball travels across it. The bricks are scattered in the usual manner, but with one difference — they also are vertically stacked. This means you can knock a brick out and the three or four other bricks in the pile will fall down one step. This raises interesting possibilities for blasting as you can make a hole in the wall and then have the ball rebound off the back board and then the 'hole' again as it fills in. All the piles slowly start to reduce without you seeing the ball at all — this is because it is hidden by the 3D wall.

In common with the new *Breakouts*, in *Ball Breaker* bricks have different functions: some are bombs; some have monsters on

them that will kill you; while others will shrink your bat or destroy all the bricks on that level.

To help you, you have ten missiles. These travel slowly across the screen but can be extremely helpful in destroying bricks the ball cannot get to.

The game's graphics are stunning and the animation and colouring superb. My only gripe is that the graphics can get a bit stuttery if a lot is happening. The gameplay is very challenging, although when you get a new ball it is shot at you from such close range you can't get to it in time. This is a common design fault and usually happens when the designer or programmer gets too good at the game he is designing. Perhaps more intense game testing is called for next time, lads.

But, other than this basic flaw, the game is very good and I hope it does well. MR

SCORELINE

Impact	90%
Originality	45%
Gameplay	80%
X-Factor	85%

OVERALL

75%

REVIEW

GAMER

What do games like *Star Raiders II*, *Academy*, *Escape from Singe's Castle*, *Baby Boomer Trivial Pursuits* and *Winter Games* have in common? The answer is they're all sequels.

Sequels aren't exactly new, after all the films *Star Trek IV*, *Rocky IV* and *James Bond No. 14* have all done the rounds. Quite often sequels are better than the originals and generate yet more sequels.

Back to home computers. The prize for the world's worst sequel must go to Virgin for its *FA Cup '87*. The name should sound familiar — it's supposed to be an updated version of *FA Cup Football*. Unfortunately, it's almost identical and grossly over-priced. Another soccer sequel con was US Gold's *World Cup Carnival* which was a re-packaged version of Artic's *World Cup* sequel.

If you think that's bizarre, what about Alligata's *Who Dares Wins II*? The sequel without an original! This was a hastily re-written version of the unpublished *Who Dares Wins* — Alligata tried and failed to prevent Elite's taking legal action alleging *Who Dares Wins* was similar to its *Commando* game.

CRL's excellent *Tau Ceti* has spawned a number of games featuring the Gal Corps. The *Ball*

blazer/Breakout game *Room 10* was set in a Gal Corps leisure complex. Spectrum 128 and Amstrad owners can get a special edition of the original game featuring impressive building interiors, libraries and bigger game area. Even *Cyborg* — reviewed elsewhere in this issue — is controlled by the Gal Corps.

Aliens is probably the oddest of sequels. *Alien* the film spawned *Alien* the game, which was released by Mind Games and then by Bug Byte. However, *Aliens*, the sequel to the film, produced two different games. Both versions have been featured in recent Gamers — one is British and from Electric Dreams the other American, from Activision.

But undoubtedly the most controversial sequel was *Beach Head II*. This Access (US Gold) compilation of arcade wargames created near panic in the anti-wargame lobby — including *Radio 4* — as it featured realistic synthesised screams and yells as hapless soldiers were shot or crushed under tanks!

Repton and *Repton 2* have amazed BBC owners with their fast and frantic *Boulderdash* style gameplay but only now, with the release of *Repton 3*, can Commodore 64 and Amstrad owners join in the fun. Similarly, *Summer Games* was imported by Quicksilver and just missed out on the *Decathlon* boom. Undaunted Epyx, now distributed by US Gold, released sequels and an incredible series of sports simulations appeared, these included the seven event *Summer Games II*, featuring impossible equestrian and canoeing events; the award winning *Winter Games* and the recent *World Games* compilation.

The *Leader Board* sequels have travelled almost full circle. The original Access hit and hope golf game came complete with four



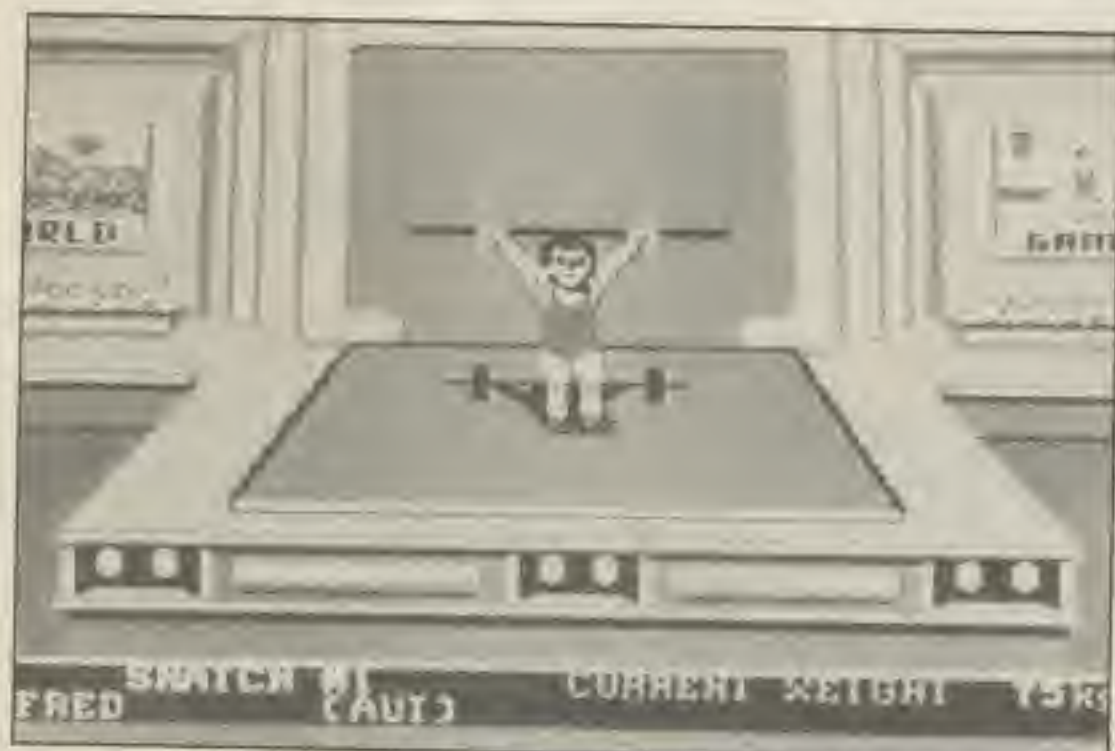
ALIENS

Some game just come and go; others just keep coming back in different forms. Is it worth the effort?

SEQUELS



BEACH HEAD II



WORLD GAMES

incredibly wet courses. In fact, the holes were little more than islands set in a massive lake! *Leader Board Tournament* added four more equally wet courses, but *Leader Board Executive* is a totally revamped game with the added hazards of trees and bunkers.

What's next I wonder, *Leader Board Executive Tournament*?

Daley's Supertest was the dismal follow-up to the chart busting *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* and featured the great man in ten rather silly events, like shooting, and was a shadow of the

PITSTOP II



original. The opposite is true of *Pitstop* and its successor *Pitstop II*. The original was a standard 3D racing game but boasted an additional feature — you pulled into the pits for refueling and a tyre change. *Pitstop II* duplicated this but added a split screen display and a second player. The result was one of the best car racing games ever that left *Pole Position* standing.

Adventurers haven't escaped the sequel syndrome. In fact, I think that the first computer sequel was an adventure — *Zork II*. This, the second in Infocom's classic *Zork* trilogy, is featured elsewhere in this issue. Another classic adventure sequel is the role playing extravaganza, *Ultima III* and its sequel, *Ultima IV*. However, as the names suggest there are two previous *Ultimas*. Unfortunately, these were released by different companies and it's unlikely they'll make the trip across the Atlantic.

Another role playing game, *Alternate Reality*, made its UK debut last year and has rapidly become a cult game. This two disk starter pack is soon to be joined by no less than six sequels! The original game plots your adventures in a city beneath which lie the subterranean depths of the dungeon and beyond that the

combat challenge of the arena, the riches of the palace, the exploration of the wilderness and, finally, the adventure ends in revelation and destiny!

Level 9 seems to think good things come in threes. For instance, there was *Jewels of Darkness*; *Colossal Adventure*; *Adventure Quest* and *Dungeon Adventure*. Then there was *Silicon Dreams*; *Snowball*; *Return to Eden* and *The Worm in Paradise*. These have now been re-packaged and re-released by Rainbird. Each trilogy contains countless locations and a staggering 600 illustrations.

Shadowfire stunned the computer world and swept the awards — it was the first icon driven adventure. Icons caught on so fast that the new icon games have been more successful than *Shadowfire's* sequel, *Enigma Force*, which tried to transport the icon-driven heroes to an arcade game.

This idea, re-shaped, became the arcade adventure, now desperately overworked and the impressive *Fairlight II* is one of these, as is Mastertronic's cut-price classic *Knight Tyme*, the more playable sequel to *Spellbound*.

Quickening the pace, kung-fu champs can get an extra kick with more of the same in *Yie Ar Kung Fu II*.



ENIGMA FORCE

Gremlin Graphics — the people behind *Thing on a Spring II* and the latest *Monty Mole* game featured last month — has taken the unusual decision to change the game format for the sequel to *Way of the Tiger*. In a well timed move, with *Avenge* Gremlin chose not to make into yet another kung-fu game — it is more *Gauntlet* style instead. Similarly, Activision changed the puzzle solving *Hacker* into a guide the robots around a maze type sequel called *Hacker II*.

Platform games were among the first to have sequels. The incredibly playable *Bounty Bob Strikes Back* was one of the first and was the follow-up to *Miner 2049er*, which went on to inspire *Manic Miner*, which then spawned *Jet Set Willy* and so on.

The rock pushing, diamond collecting *Boulderdash* was one of the first games I ever reviewed. It has since been followed by *Rockford's Riot* (both by Beyond) and now by the *Boulderdash*



Construction Set (Datatype). Datatype has also produced the third in the superb *Spy vs Spy* series which has moved from the inside of a building — in the original spy game, to an island in *Spy II* and now to frozen wastelands in *Spy vs Spy II*. Despite the changes of location and of software house the black and white spys are still building unbelievable traps for each other in games that mimic their comic book capers.

Escape from Singe's Castle is the sequel to Software Project's coin-up conversion of the incredible *Dragon's Lair* video

game. In part two you get to guide Dirk the Daring through eight more screens of this fiendish arcade adventure.

Two other sequels to coin-up conversions have just been released: *Bombjack II* and *Gauntlet — the Deeper Dungeons*. The latest in the continuing Trivial Pursuit series, the Baby Boomer Edition, is also out, as is *Star Raiders II* — the long awaited follow up to the Atari classic, and an Amstrad whodunnit, *The Sydney Affair*, the sequel *L'Affaire Vera Cruz*. All are reviewed below, so read on.

SEQUELS

SEQUELS

ESCAPE FROM
SINGE'S CASTLE

Title: Trivial Pursuit — Baby Boomer Edition
Computer: C64, Spectrum, Amstrad
Supplier: Domark
Price: £7.95

The Baby Boomer question pack is the third in the Trivial Pursuit series and is aimed directly at those born during the post war baby boom. But that doesn't mean you won't know any of the answers if you are under 30. After all everyone knows (or can guess) the colour of Noddy's hat or Elvis's middle name.

Naturally, the game plays exactly the same as the original and Young Players editions with the

Trivial Pursuit question master still annoying everyone with his comments, players getting embarrassed over their dismal showing on the score tables and nobody being able to guess the tunes the computer tries to play.

Six new categories on sixties and seventies culture make up the latest edition. These include: Stage and Screen; Broadcasting; Nightly News; Publishing; Life and Times and RPM. For example, did you

know that Harold Wilson banned Steptoe and Son on the 1964 polling day in case it kept Labour voters at home, or that the French and British agreed to build the channel tunnel in the early sixties, or that Daisy Duck is Donald Duck's girlfriend!

If you were born during the baby boom then this set of 3,000 questions is a must. Everyone else will still find it fascinating and a lot cheaper than the cards for the board game.

SCORELINE

Impact	55%
Originality	65%
Gameplay	75%
X-Factor	60%

OVERALL 64%

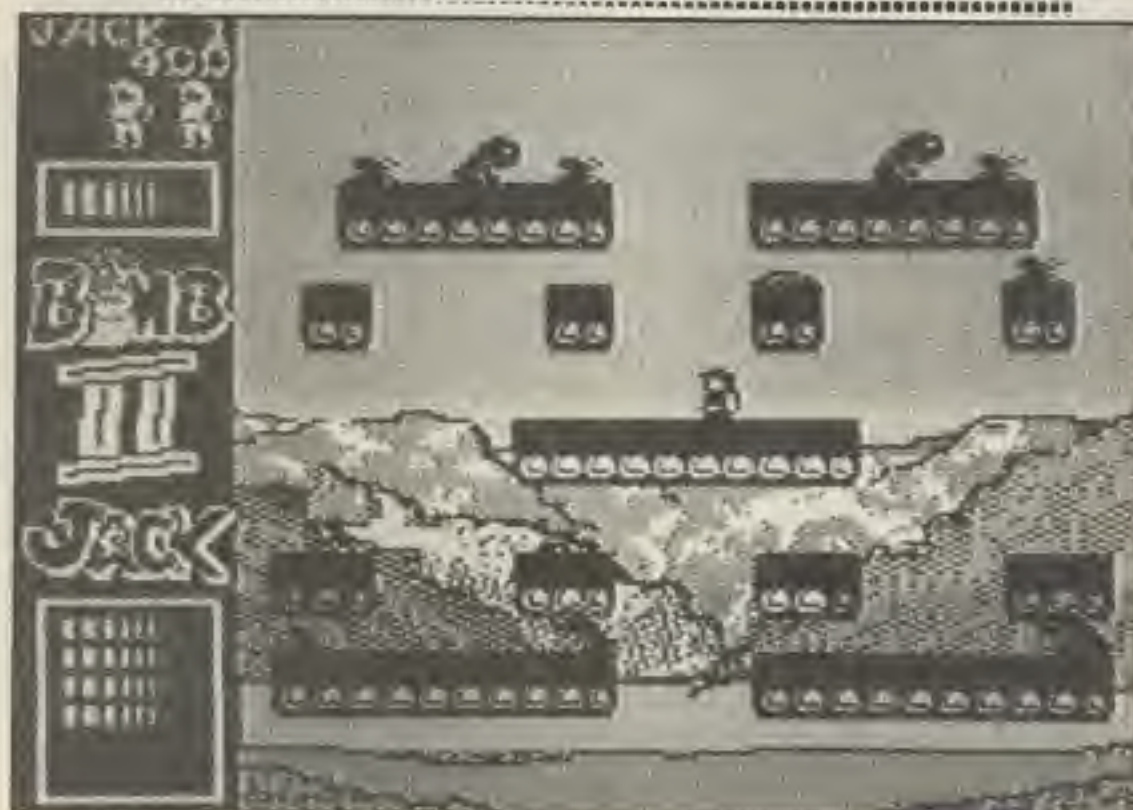
Title: Star Raiders
Computer: C64
Supplier: Electric Dms
Price: £9.99

This sequel to one of Jeff Minter's best games is a desperate fight for survival as you single-handedly take on the Zylon fleets.

The Zylons were soundly beaten in the first *Star Raiders* but in this game they have a new leader and he wants revenge! Unfortunately, you're the only Star Raider commander left and so you are on your own when the Zylons decide it's time to invade the Celos IV system.

SEQUELS

Title: Bombjack II
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Elite
Price: £7.95



Bombjack fans who are expecting another dose of panic are bound to be disappointed by this sequel even though it is a good game.

The problem lies in the lack of control you have over our hero. In the original you could run left and right and jump, and expert players developed a fine ability to steer in mid air and collect the bombs before the nasties got to them. In *Bombjack II* you can only move left and right and jump in

straight lines, and that only if there's a platform to land. Also there are no freeze bombs, bonuses or extra life disks. Despite all this *Bombjack II* is an addictive game.

The game consists of 40 screens that our hero Jack must leap around to grab all the treasure before the lava pit reptiles get him. These ambling reptiles patrol their platforms but are replaced later on by tougher mobile critters, these are best avoided. However, Jack

often comes face to face with these monsters as he is collecting the treasure spread around the screen. As you play the game you'll soon notice that, one at a time, the treasures turn into pies. Collect all the pies in the right order and you'll collect an extra life. You'll probably need this as you'll be faced with a screenful of tough, highly mobile critters.

Another big difference in this game is that Jack needn't cower anymore as he can fight back, although he may lose strength and die if he's caught off guard.

This is an addictive game but it's poles away from the original classic. It is good, but not as good as the original.

The surprising thing is that we've just touched the tip of the iceberg — there's more to come.

US Gold is soon re-release a special pack of the Broderbund *Loderunner* platform games, including the sequels.

Domark has scheduled the *Genus II Trivial Pursuit* pack for an autumn release.

Activision is rumoured to be releasing a sequel to the one and only *Ghostbusters*.

PSS is set to launch *Heroquest*, the sequel to the duck-shoot driven, role-playing game *Swords and Sorcery*.

US software company SSI — whose stuff is imported through US Gold — is soon to release *Gemstone Healer*, the sequel to *Gemstone Warrior*, and two more games in the Phantasie series.

So, there really are a lot of goodies to come, we hope.

SCORELINE

Impact	65%
Originality	45%
Gameplay	65%
X-Factor	55%

OVERALL 58%

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Luckily, you have the Liberty star fighter that is very capable of blasting the Zylon fighters, destroyers and bases into oblivion with its three computer controlled weapons.

But the Zylons have you completely outnumbered. They even have bases that can reinforce their fleets faster than you can blast them. These bases are on other planets so you should spend time bombing these once you've fought back the Zylon advance. But you can't afford to wipe out all the bases in one raid as by the time you return the Zylon destroyers will have destroyed the bases on the four planets you're supposed to be defending. And their fighters will also have wiped out the space stations where you go for refueling and repairs.

Star Raiders II demands total concentration from players who must use a combination of strategy — when to bomb or defend, and skill to win. As well as dropping bombs there are dogfights and you have to take out the incredibly difficult to hit Zylon destroyers as they hover over your cities.

Your performance is rated after every mission. You can end up as an ensign — demotion after a humiliating defeat, or an admiral the reward for victory. In the end of game of report you will also find listed the number of Zylons you've trashed.

It's good to see that there's still life in an old classic although the graphics are looking a little dated. If you'd like your shoot-em-up skills to be tested to their limits then sign up for *Star Raiders II*.

SCORELINE

Impact	65%
Originality	45%
Gameplay	85%
X-Factor	75%

OVERALL 68%



Title: The Sydney Affair
Computer: Amstrad
Supplier: Infogrammes
Price: £9.99

James Sydney is dead. He was shot through the head on his way to work and it's your job to find out who did it, why and get enough evidence to put them away. This shouldn't pose any major problem to the man who solved the Vera Cruz affair. You did solve it, didn't you?

The game begins at the scene of the crime with Monsieur Sydney lying in a pool of blood. Using your trusty magnifying glass you must examine the body and a building opposite where you think the shot was fired. If you look carefully enough you may find some clues such as a briefcase and contents, a fingerprint on a window and a spent bullet.

Back at the police station you must fit the pieces together to solve the mystery with the help of the police computer. Through this

you can demand statements from any suspect or witness as long as you have a name and address, get autopsy and ballistic reports, compare evidence with statements, get information from other police forces and, finally, order an arrest.

All this isn't easy as you have very little to go on, but gradually one thing leads to another until, finally, you find out who the killer is — or get yet another red herring!

SCORELINE

Impact	65%
Originality	60%
Gameplay	70%
X-Factor	70%

OVERALL 66%



Title: Gauntlet — The Deeper Dungeons
Computer: Spectrum, C64
Supplier: US Gold
Price: £4.99

More monsters, magic and mayhem are served up for dungeon delvers hooked on the coin-op conversion of *Gauntlet* in this 512 level sequel.

Once again one or two players can take the roles of Merlin the wizard, Thyra the valkyrie, Thor the warrior and Questor the elf as they delve deeper into dungeons

packed with terror and treasure. These dungeons are not for the faint hearted as, although they contain a familiar collection of ghosts, grunts, lobbers and sorcerers, these appear in large enough combinations designed to kill you relatively easily. For example, level four begins with a shower from a horde of lobbers,

level 10 with a confrontation with six 'deaths' and other levels swarm with countless ghosts that sap your health.

Some of the levels have been designed by players of the original *Gauntlet* — which probably accounts for the particularly evil levels; you even have to make sure you don't pick up too many potions so you have enough room for the keys you need!

The coin-op sequel, *Gauntlet II*, is now in most arcades and it's a shame that some of its features

aren't included in this game. More of the same, no matter how devious, doesn't seem to be enough. At £4.99 for another 512 levels no *Gauntlet* player is going to complain but it could have been so much better.

SCORELINE

Impact	85%
Originality	45%
Gameplay	90%
X-Factor	85%

OVERALL 76%

SEQUELS

VOIDRUNNER

Title: Voidrunner + Hellgate
Computer: Commodore 16
Supplier: Ariolasoft/Llamasoft
Price: £6.95 (cass)

Oh joy of joys. Two Yak the Hairy games for the price of one. And this time it has no other name over it, so I must assume that Jeff himself programmed them — they are both very Minteresque.

First — Voidrunner. This is the greatest blast I have seen for any computer. Even the 64. It seems that if we want a playable shoot-em-up we must always look to the Yak.



Jeff (who else?) has put two great games on the tape. This makes Minter the best programmer on three computers. I have no hesitation in according this the first C16 **Gamer Gold**. Welcome to the big league C16



Minter has consistently produced ultra-playable blasts and this knocks the hell out of bas relief graphics or meaty sound tracks — it's excellent. It's better than excellent — it's the best! What do you have to do? Oh, blast things and ... blast things ... and sometimes you even have to ... blast things! Great variety eh? Alright, down to the nitty gritty.

Against various backgrounds on the single screen, maybe dots forming rotating ellipses or sine curves, you blast things. To blast you have four ships which have a different formation on each level. The first puts you far left and far right down a little so your fire is an arc; another has the bases together so you fire in all four directions and so on.

There are various nasties, all of which you must blast before they move. Some may need more than one blast but just keep on blasting 'til it goes down. Great!

There are lines that move vertically down the screen pulsing now and again; if they touch your ship when pulsing, you lose one of your four lives. As the levels increase the lines become invisible, increase in number, pulse more often and more accurately. This is a really nasty thing to have happen to you. On Gnu (yes, the levels have names such as Yak, Llama and Sheep) your ships split up: two point upwards; two downwards — spread them out to decrease the odds of being pulsed.

The game is very Minteresque graphically and aurally — no tunes but FX (effects) to destroy your ears — ie explosions, and graphical FX to blow your eyes. Often your mind just won't take it and you'll collapse in a heap on the floor. If you want to go deaf and blind in two minutes just turn the volume and brightness up full and blast.

As a C64 owner, you may expect

me to have a go and then get back to Dropzone, but I found myself getting more and more addicted and left the Uridiums and Dropzones for Voidrunner. I am now thoroughly addicted and may die — either of withdrawal symptoms if I stop playing, or eye and ear deterioration if I carry on.

This is the most playable blast of all time and if it was released as it stands on the C64 I would still feel the same way — the game deserves a Gamer Gold on its own. The only complaints I have are that the high score table is joystick operated and oh, it won't load on my C64.

Two tips:

- 1) If something's coming to hit you — move.
- 2) If there's something moving, blast it, and if there's something standing still, blast it.

SCORELINE

Impact	99%
Originality	97%
Gameplay	99%
X-Factor	99%

OVERALL 99%

R-HELLGATE



and now ... *Heilgate*.

Oh, look. Another Jeff Minter game. I wonder what you have to do! I say to myself with just a hint of sarcasm.

I originally played *Hellgate* on the VIC and later on the C64, now on the C16, it is every bit as good. Basically, you have to blast things ... and ... okay, we won't go through all that again, but this is another excellent Minteresque blast. Once loaded and having typed in the SYS (I don't know why either) I press fire. Prepare to die is blasted upon the screen. Charming. I think.

There is a square around the edge of the screen and on each edge there is a laser head. Left and right base control the bottom, the top ones the top — ie if you move left the bottom base moves left and the top moves right. Up and down control the base on the left and right verticals. Now you know that, that's about it.

There's a wrap around feature (go off one side and come on the other), three smart bombs (plasma taps), which are controlled

automatically and a variety of nasties to destroy. But for once, you can't blast everything that moves. I quote: "The poor meta goats ... the poor frightened beasts ... goats are nice ... be kind to them. Don't blast them into little pieces ..." Yes, Jeff, we get the picture. Okay.

Neat graphics. Very fast. Very furious. Mind-numbing FX. Invisible aliens. Twenty tough levels. If you don't move, firing can cause overheating. Not much else really. An excellent game. Just blast everything that moves. (Except the goats. Yes, Jeff, I love goats too!)

RN

SCORELINE

Impact	95%
Originality	96%
Gameplay	94%
X-Factor	95%

OVERALL 97%



"duffers"



Title: Kinetik
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Firebird
Price: £8.95

Kinetik, the latest Firebird game will boggle your brain. The object is to fly a spaceship through a maze of surreal screens packed full of power-draining nasties, deadly plants, killer cubes and strange scenery. You must also collect three giant letters that form a Latin word! Deliver these in the right order into the hands of the Kinemator(?) and you'll win the game. Get it wrong and you'll probably become even more confused.

Your spaceship begins the game unarmed with just a flimsy protective shield. However, scattered throughout the screens are objects to help you in your quest, such as a shield, powder sprayer — to frighten the planet's inhabitants, and other devices to counteract Kinetik's bewildering laws of physics.

The game's law of physics change from screen to screen and affect how your ship bounces, the gravity it has to fight against it and the friction when it touches ground. For example, a high bouncing ship can move from one screen to the next where it will plummet like a brick in strong gravity. Unfortunately, it may land it on top of a deadly plant as a result so you have to be ever ready.

Kinetik is an incredibly difficult game to play and also suffers from having a very silly objective. After all, why would the Kinemator(?) of an alien world want a three letter Latin word? Forget this one and get Sentinel instead.

TH

SCORELINE

Impact	45%
Originality	45%
Gameplay	30%
X-Factor	35%

OVERALL 39%

Title: Who Dares Wins II
Computer: Atari
Supplier: Tynesoft
Price: £7.95

Armed with only an automatic rifle and 12 grenades you must fight your way through eight fields of battle in this Atari conversion of Alligata's version of the arcade hit, *Commando*. Got that?

Accompanied by the theme tune to *The Great Escape*, you battle your way through the hordes of enemy troops that come at you from all angles.

You begin your assault surrounded by trees and flanked by two crumpled buildings. These hide the first wave of enemy soldiers that rush out at you. You can take these out in a variety of ways: by blowing them away with your gun or by hurling one of your grenades, this will kill anyone in the general vicinity.

Later, you'll be faced with missile-firing mortars, machine gun blasting helicopters, tanks and planes as well as natural hazards such as swamps. But when you reach the first garrison you can release your men who the enemy has previously captured.

When you begin the next battlefield the enemy gets even tougher, but you should be perfecting your tactics by then. I found that

fortune favoured the brave and by charging at the enemy I soon got them to scatter and run away.

It's good to see that Tynesoft is prepared to support the Atari with game conversions. However, this one is disappointing as the game stops every few seconds to wait for the screen to scroll. This can also cost you one of your four lives as you can't see beyond the end of the screen and may find yourself ambushed. The screens are also remarkably bland considering the Atari's incredible colour facilities. Although these are shown off on the title screen the action features dark brown figures against a green and brown background which is brightened up only by the odd purple grenade explosion.

TH

SCORELINE

Impact	30%
Originality	35%
Gameplay	25%
X-Factor	40%

OVERALL 33%





Title: Strike
Computer: Spectrum
Supplier: Mastertronic MAD
Price: £2.99

Title: League Challenge
Computer: Amstrad
Supplier: Atlantis
Price: £1.99

Title: Thunderzone
Computer: Amstrad
Supplier: Firebird
Price: £1.99

My first reaction to this game was disappointment once I discovered that Arthur Scargill didn't feature anywhere in it *despite* the title. In fact, what the game really is, is a ten-pin bowling simulation, a sort of budget 10th Frame.

There are two logical ways to display a bowling alley: you can have a side-on view of bowler and lane or a bowler's eye view looking straight down towards the skittles. Mastertronic has gone for a diagonal perspective! Your man wobbles about as though he has got ants in his pants, this too makes judging your position on the lane somewhat difficult.

The game consists entirely of lining yourself up and timing the release of the ball which then just dribbles out in front of you if you are too quick; too late and you throw the ball up in the air and it drops down behind your leading leg (ouch!). But if you time the release properly, the ball drops down onto the lane, miraculously picks up speed and rolls down towards the pins. There is no variation in the game, such as being able to hook the ball although there are four skill levels, these just merely improve the ability of your opponent.

The idea of the MAD range was that they were supposed considerably better than the normal run of the mill budget game. But, like too many of recent MAD releases, this one just isn't.

Atlantis do produce some really ordinary games and this is one of them.

League Challenge is roughly in the mould of Football Manager and puts you at the bottom of division four with the team of your choice. Each division has 16 teams and each team can have up to 15 players in its squad.

All the usual buying and selling of players is catered for as are its strength and fitness. Your overdraft runs to £500,000, if this doesn't sound much, I bought Ian Rush for £50,000.

A level of training can be chosen but there is little scope for twiddling around with the teams and the league runs pretty much to form — three points for a win, one for a draw. The top three teams go up and the bottom three go down.

The FA Cup is supported and works like a knock-out, complete with replays — though I got through five rounds whilst at the bottom of division two!

The graphical sequences are a joke, however, and just take up valuable time. The game itself is very slow because it is written in Basic.

Yet another disappointing game from Atlantis. With Code Masters, Mastertronic and Firebird also competing in the budget market, I'm beginning to think that this end of the market is becoming a bit crowded.

Yet another zap 'em game with pretensions to being something else. The game has you playing the chief of the Federation Liberation Forces and you have to clear Flavious V of the nasty invading Zircon forces.

The screen display is incredibly complex with no less than 12 indicators, some of them doubled up. Icons cover the lower part of the screen with the various functions of your weaponry.

Basically, the controls are: rotate left and right; thrust and select icon. This is all achieved by pulling the joystick about and is very difficult to get used to, as is the screen. The controls operate as if you are viewing it from a plan view, but the actual view is a 3D forward-looking view. All very confusing.

The graphics are cluttered and the lowest possible resolution mode is used. This in conjunction with the relatively small active area of the screen makes the display rather cluttered.

As well as shooting everything that moves and watching your various power and alert gauges, you can also pick up power rods with a sort of space scoop. This is the only break in what is a game of mind-numbing tedium.

There are a lot of very good zap 'em games on the market at the moment and a lot of extremely bad ones. Usually these latter sort have aspirations to be something else and this causes problems. This game falls firmly into this latter category. Sorry Firebird, another lemon.

GRH

SCORELINE

Impact 40%
Originality 40%
Gameplay 30%
X-Factor 30%

OVERALL

35%

SCORELINE

Impact 40%
Originality 20%
Gameplay 40%
X-Factor 35%

OVERALL

33%

SCORELINE

Impact 35%
Originality 30%
Gameplay 30%
X-Factor 25%

OVERALL

30%

Combat the Dreglords inside your C16.

CAVES OF HELL



Ian Hebdon of Easingwold has programmed a neat little game for C16 and Plus 4 owners.

Can you survive the ancient caves of the Dreglords and complete the test set by the devious mind of the mighty millipede?

In each of the caves you must fill in the blocks at the top and bottom of the screen. You can jump from one surface to another but be careful, if you land on a millipede or filled in block you will die!

The keys to control the game are:

0 (zero) — up
Z — left
X — right
O — down

```

0 VOLB
5 POKES2,55:POKES6,55
10 REM UDG PROGRAM
20 COLOR0,1:COLOR4,1:PRINT"CAVES OF HELL"
21 CHAR,0,10,"DESIGNED AND PROGRAMMED BY I.HEBDON.1986"
22 CHAR,0,20,"FOR EGGSOFT LTD...PLEASE WAIT"
25 FORI=0TO527:READA:POKE14336+I,A:NEXT
30 POKES5298,192:POKES5299,56
31 GOTO20160
35 LE=1:LI=3:SC=0:PH=0
40 A=3387:B=20:C=20:D=7:E=0:F=10:G=0:H=37:P=2:U=2:M=0:X=38:
   IIS="000000":I=17:J=10:SCNCLR
41 CHAR,0,0,"SCORE":PRINTSC:CHAR,0,1,"LIVES":PRINTLI:CHAR,
   0,2,"BRICKS DONE":PRINTM
42 IFLE=5THENGOTO20510:ELSEY=0:DO:CHAR,I,6,"+":CHAR,I,21,
   "+":I=I+1:LOOPUNTILY=39
43 CHAR,0,3,"AIR":FORT=4IDK:CHAR,I,3,"<":NEXTI:
   CHAR,0,4,"LEVEL":PRINTLE
44 FORT=7IO20:CHAR,0,I,"-":CHAR,I,I,"-":CHAR,38,I,"-":
   CHAR,37,I,"-":NEXTI
55 DO
56 GOSUB20040
57 GOSUB200
60 IFP=2THENGOSUB620
61 IFP=1THENGOSUB640
100 GOSUB440
190 LOOP
200 IFLE=2THENGOTO250
210 IFLE=1THENGOTO340
220 IFLE=3THENGOTO10020
230 IFLE=4THENGOTO20060
240 RETURN
250 CHAR,B,C,"*%2"
260 B=B+1:CHAR,B,C,"*%2"
265 GOSUB440
270 IFB=32THENGOTO280:ELSE250
280 CHAR,B,C,"":CHAR,B,D,""
290 B=B+1:CHAR,B,C,"*%2"
295 GOSUB440
300 IFB=1THENGOTO310:ELSE280
310 CHAR,B,C,""
320 GOTO250
340 REM***STONKERS***
350 CHAR,G,F,"??":CHAR,H,F,"??"
360 G=G+2:H=H+2
370 CHAR,G,F,"??":CHAR,H,F,"??"
375 GOSUB440
380 IFG<20THEN350:ELSE390
390 G=G+1:H=H+1
400 CHAR,G,F,"":CHAR,H,F,""
405 GOSUB440
410 IFG<2THEN390
440 REM***MOVE YOU***
443 IFPEEK(A+1)=61THENGOTO970
444 IFPEEK(A+1)=61THENGOTO970
445 IFPEEK(A+1)=41THENGOTO970
446 IFPEEK(A+1)=40THENGOTO970
447 IFPEEK(A+81)=30THENGOTO970
448 IFPEEK(A+79)=38THENGOTO970
450 GETAS
451 IFAS="Z"THENGOSUB600:P=1:A=A+1
470 IFAS="X"THENGOSUB600:P=2:A=A+1
480 IFAS="O"THENGOSUB760
490 IFAS="D"THENGOSUB870
495 IFII>80THENGOSUB20000

```

```

500 IFP=2THENGOSUB620
510 IFP=1THENGOSUB640
590 RETURN
600 POKEA,32:POKEA+40,32:POKEA+80,32
610 RETURN
620 IFU=1THENPOKEA,0:POKEA+40,35:POKEA+80,33
625 IFU=2THENPOKEA,65:POKEA+40,35:POKEA+80,0
627 GOSUB660
630 RETURN
640 IFU=1THENPOKEA,27:POKEA+40,28:POKEA+80,31
645 IFU=2THENPOKEA,64:POKEA+40,28:POKEA+80,27
646 GOSUB660
650 RETURN
660 IFU=2THENGOSUB690
670 IFU=1THENGOSUB720
680 RETURN
690 GOSUB20040
695 IFPEEK(A+40)=43THENPOKEA+40,47:M=M+1:SC=SC+25
700 IFPEEK(A+40)=47THENM=M
701 CHAR,0,0,"SCORE":PRINTSC:CHAR,0,2,"BRICKS DONE":PRINTM
705 IFM>68THENGOSUB40025
710 RETURN
720 IFPEEK(A+120)=43THENPOKEA+120,47:M=M+1:SC=SC+25
730 IFPEEK(A+120)=47THENM=M
731 CHAR,0,0,"SCORE":PRINTSC:CHAR,0,2,"BRICKS DONE":PRINTM
735 IFM>68THEN40025
740 RETURN
760 DO
780 POKEA,27:POKEA+40,28:POKEA+80,31
790 IFPEEK(A+120)=43THENEXIT
800 IFPEEK(A+120)=47THENIFU<>2GOTO970
801 IFPEEK(A+120)=47THENEXIT
805 IFPEEK(A+120)=63THENGOSUB870
810 POKEA,32:POKEA+40,32:POKEA+80,32
820 A=A+40
825 SOUND1,95,5:SOUND2,55,5
830 LOOP
835 U=1
840 RETURN
870 DO
890 POKEA,64:POKEA+40,28:POKEA+80,27
900 IFPEEK(A+40)=43THENEXIT
910 IFPEEK(A+40)=47THENIFU<>2GOTO970
915 IFPEEK(A+40)=47THENEXIT
920 IFPEEK(A+40)=63THENGOTO970
930 POKEA,32:POKEA+40,32:POKEA+80,32
940 A=A+40
945 SOUND1,85,5:SOUND2,45,5
950 LOOP
955 U=2
960 RETURN
970 PRINT"YOU LOST ONE OF YOUR THREE LIVES"
975 I=1:DO:I=I+1:LOOPUNTILI=500
980 LI=LI+1
990 IFLI<1THENGOTO40000
1000 GOTO40
10020 CHAR,B,C,"*%2":CHAR,B+7,D,"((('))"
10030 B=B+1:CHAR,B,C,"*%2":CHAR,B+7,D,"((('))"
10040 GOSUB440
10050 IFB+7=32THENGOTO10070:ELSE10020
10070 CHAR,B,C,"":CHAR,B+7,D,""
10080 B=B+1:CHAR,B,C,"*%2":CHAR,B+7,D,"((('))"
10085 GOSUB440
10090 IFB=1THENGOTO10110:ELSE10070
10110 CHAR,B,C,"":CHAR,B+7,D,""

```



```

10120 GOTO10020
20000 K=X-1:CHAR,K+1,3," "
20001 SOUND1,5,5
20010 IFK=3THENBQSUB40000
20020 IIF="000000"
20040 D=INT(RND(1)*9)+1
20050 IFD=1THENPRINT"@"
20051 IFD=2THENPRINT"@"
20052 IFD=3THENPRINT"@"
20053 IFD=4THENPRINT"@"
20054 IFD=5THENPRINT"@"
20055 IFD=6THENPRINT"@"
20056 IFD=8THENPRINT"@"
20057 IFD=9THENPRINT"@"
20058 RETURN
20060 CHAR,B,C," ""%&"
20065 CHAR,I,J," ??? "
20070 B=B+1:CHAR,B,C," ""%&"
20075 I=I+1:CHAR,I,J," ??? "
20080 GOSUB440
20090 IFB=32THENBQTO20100:ELSE20060
20100 CHAR,B,C," ""CHAR,I,J," "
20110 B=B+1:CHAR,B,C," ""%&"
20115 I=I+1:CHAR,I,J," ??? "
20120 GOSUB440
20130 IFI=21THENBQTO20140:ELSE20100
20140 CHAR,B,C," ""CHAR,I,J," "
20150 GOTO20060
20160 PRINT"CAVES OF HELL"
20170 PRINT"YOU MUST ESCAPE FROM THE CAVES OF HELL"
20180 PRINT"YOU MUST DO THIS BY CHANGING THE"
20190 PRINT"BLOCKS TO / BLOCKS YOU CAN DO THIS"
20200 PRINT"BY SIMPLY WALKING ON THEM.THERE ARE"
20210 PRINT"42 WALLS TO BE DONE THEREFORE YOU MUST"
20220 PRINT"JUMP FROM WALL TO WALL."
20225 PRINT"PRESS <SPACE> TO CONTINUE":GETKEYS
20226 PRINT"CAVES OF HELL"
20227 PRINT"THEY ARE"
20230 PRINT"THESE MILLPEDES WHICH YOU MUST NOT TOUCH"
20240 PRINT"IF YOU DO TOUCH THE MILLPEDES IT WILL"
20250 PRINT"RESULT IN INSTANT DEATH YOU CAN ALSO DYE"
20260 PRINT"BY COLLIDING WITH THE PULVERISER WHICH"
20270 PRINT"IS PRESENT IN A FEW OF THE CAVES."
20280 PRINT"PRESS <SPACE> TO CONTINUE"
20290 GETKEYS:IFAS<>" "THEN20290
20300 PRINT"CAVES OF HELL"
20310 PRINT"THE KEYS YOU MUST USE ARE:-"
20320 PRINT"2-LEFT..X-RIGHT..O-JUMP UP..Q-JUMP DOWN"
20330 PRINT"....PRESS THE <SPACE> BAR TO CONTINUE..."
20340 GETKEYS:IFAS<>" "THEN20340
20350 CLR:GOTO35
20360 SCNCLR
20370 PRINT"***RELAXION MODE***PRESS A TO ABORT***"
20380 PRINT"MAKE A PATTERN USING THE GAME KEYS"
20385 PRINT"PRESS <CLEAR HOME> KEY TO CLEAR SCREEN"
20390 L=10:D=10
20395 COLOR1,INT(RND(1)*16)+1,3
20400 CHAR,L,0,"@ "
20410 GETIF
20420 IFS="O"THEND=D+1
20425 IFD>21THEND=21
20430 IFS="X"THEND=D-1
20435 IFD<3THEND=3
20440 IFS="2"THENL=L-1
20445 IFL<1THENL=1
20450 IFS="X"THENL=L+1
20455 IFL>35THENL=35
20460 CHAR,L,0,"@ "
20470 IFS="A"THENGOTO40040
20480 IFS="W"THENGOTO20360
20500 GOTO20395
20510 SCNCLR:SC=SC+400:A=10:B=38:L=0:N=INT(RND(1)*18)+1
20511 PH=PH+1:IFPH>7THENGOTO20780
20520 CHAR,0,0,"/////////////////////////////////////"
20530 CHAR,0,21,"/////////////////////////////////////"
20535 CHAR,0,21,"SCORE:":PRINTSC:CHAR,0,22,"LEVEL:"
:PRINTL:CHAR,0,23,"PHASE:":PRINTPH
20540 CHAR,B,A,"C":CHAR,B,A+1,"E":CHAR,B,A+2,"-"
20550 CHAR,L,N," ""%&"
20560 GETAS
20570 IFAS="O"THENCHAR,B,A+2," ":A=A-1:IFA<1THENA=1
20580 IFAS="X"THENCHAR,B,A," ":A=A+1:IFA>17THENA=17
20590 IFAS=" "THENGOTO20630
20600 CHAR,B,A,"C":CHAR,B,A+1,"E":CHAR,B,A+2,"-"
20610 L=L+1:CHAR,L,N," ""%&"
20620 IFL>31THENGOTO40000
20625 GOTO20560
20630 C=B-2:D=A+1
20640 CHAR,C,D,"J "
20650 GETBS
20660 IFBS="O"THENCHAR,B,A+2," ":A=A-1:IFA<2THENA=2
20670 IFBS="X"THENCHAR,B,A," ":A=A+1:IFA>16THENA=16
20680 IFBS=" "THEN20700
20685 CHAR,B,A,"C":CHAR,B,A+1,"E":CHAR,B,A+2,"-"
20700 IFC=1THENGOTO20730
20710 IFC=3THENGOTO20600
20715 C=C-1
20720 GOTO20640
20730 IFD=NTHEMSC=SC+25:CHAR,0,21,"SCORE:":PRINTSC:GOTO20510
20740 IFD<NTHENGOTO20750
20750 IFPH=6THENGOTO20780:ELSEGOTO20560
20780 SCNCLR:CHAR,0,20,"?????????????????????????????????"
20790 A=19
20800 B=3:C=36:D=18:E=B:F=1:SC=SC+100
20810 CHAR,0,0,"SCORE:":PRINTSC:CHAR,0,4,"
THE BATTLEMENTS IN THE CAVES OF HELL"
20820 CHAR,B,A," ":CHAR,B,A-1," # ":CHAR,B,A-2," @ "
20830 CHAR,C,D,"J "
20840 GETAS

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20850 IFAS="2"THENB=B-1:IFB<2THENB=2
20860 IFAS="X"THENB=B+1:IFB>36THENBQTO20920
20870 IFAS=" "THENGOTO20940
20880 C=C-1:IFC=2THENCHAR,C,D," ":C=36
20890 IFC=B+1THENGOTO150
20900 GOTO20820
20910 GOTO40000
20920 CHAR,B,A," ":CHAR,B,A-1," ":CHAR,B,A-2," "
20930 GOTO20790
20940 CHAR,B,A," ":A=A-1
20950 CHAR,B,A," ":CHAR,B,A-1," # ":CHAR,B,A-2," @ "
20960 GETBS
20970 IFBS="2"THENB=B-1:IFB<2THENB=2
20980 IFBS="X"THENB=B+1:IFB>36THENBQTO20920
20990 IFBS=" "THEN21000
21000 IFF=1THENIFA=13THENGOTO21020:ELSEGOTO20940
21020 CHAR,B,A-2," ":A=A+1
21030 CHAR,B,A," ":CHAR,B,A-1," # ":CHAR,B,A-2," @ "
21040 GETBS
21050 IFBS="2"THENB=B-1:IFB<2THENB=2
21060 IFBS="X"THENB=B+1:IFB>36THENBQTO20920
21070 IFBS=" "THEN21080
21080 C=C-1:IFC=2THENCHAR,C,D," ":C=36
21090 IFC=1+B+1THENGOTO40000
21100 IFC=B+1THENGOTO40000
21110 IFF=1THENIFA=19THENGOTO20880
21120 F=F+1
21140 IFF=3THENGOTO20780
30000 DATA060,126,249,241,241,126,060
30001 DATA024,060,102,126,102,102,102,000
30002 DATA 124,102,102,124,102,102,124,0
30003 DATA60,102,96,96,96,102,60,0
30004 DATA120,108,102,102,102,108,120,0
30005 DATA126,96,96,120,96,96,126,0
30006 DATA126,96,96,120,96,96,96,0
30007 DATA60,102,96,110,102,102,60,0
30008 DATA102,102,102,126,102,102,102,0
30009 DATA60,24,24,24,24,24,60,0
30010 DATA30,12,12,12,12,108,156,0
30011 DATA102,108,120,112,120,108,102,0
30012 DATA96,96,96,96,96,96,126,0
30013 DATA99,119,127,107,99,99,99,0
30014 DATA102,118,126,126,110,102,102,0
30015 DATA60,102,102,102,102,102,60,0
30016 DATA124,102,102,124,96,96,96,0
30017 DATA60,102,102,102,102,60,14,0
30018 DATA124,102,102,124,120,108,102,0
30019 DATA60,102,96,60,6,102,60,0
30020 DATA126,24,24,24,24,24,24,0
30021 DATA102,102,102,102,102,102,60,0
30022 DATA102,102,102,102,102,60,24,0
30023 DATA99,99,99,107,127,119,99,0
30024 DATA102,102,60,24,60,102,102,0
30025 DATA102,102,102,60,24,24,24,0
30026 DATA126,6,12,24,48,96,126,0
30027 DATA060,126,159,143,143,159,126,060
30028 DATA060,067,090,242,226,066,067,060
30029 DATA000,000,000,063,015,000,000,000
30030 DATA000,000,000,000,000,000,119,221
30031 DATA020,020,020,020,020,020,116,252
30032 DATA0,0,0,0,0,0,0,0
30033 DATA040,040,040,040,040,040,046,063
30034 DATA102,102,102,0,0,0,0,0
30035 DATA060,184,090,079,071,066,184,060
30036 DATA000,000,000,252,240,000,000,000
30037 DATA001,007,012,024,048,086,192,128
30038 DATA240,180,224,112,000,000,000,000
30039 DATA128,224,048,024,012,006,003,001
30040 DATA128,247,028,000,000,000,000,000
30041 DATA000,000,000,000,048,224,160,240
30042 DATA000,102,060,255,060,102,000,000
30043 DATA255,129,189,165,165,189,129,255
30044 DATA0,0,0,0,0,24,24,48
30045 DATA0,0,0,126,0,0,0,0
30046 DATA0,0,0,0,0,24,24,0
30047 DATA255,255,255,255,255,255,255,255
30048 DATA60,102,110,118,102,102,60,0
30049 DATA24,24,96,24,24,24,126,0
30050 DATA60,102,6,12,48,96,126,0
30051 DATA60,102,6,28,6,102,60,0
30052 DATA6,14,30,102,127,6,6,0
30053 DATA126,96,124,6,6,102,60,0
30054 DATA60,102,96,124,102,102,60,0
30055 DATA126,102,12,24,24,24,24,0
30056 DATA60,102,102,60,102,102,60,0
30057 DATA60,102,102,62,6,102,60,0
30058 DATA0,24,0,0,24,0,0,0
30059 DATA0,0,24,0,0,24,24,48
30060 DATA14,24,48,96,48,24,14,0
30061 DATA0,0,126,0,126,0,0,0
30062 DATA112,24,12,6,12,24,112,0
30063 DATA170,085,170,085,170,085,170,085
30064 DATA252,124,020,020,020,020,020,020
30065 DATA063,062,040,040,040,040,040,040
40000 PRINT"GAME OVER...YOUR FINAL SCORE WAS:":SC
40001 T=1:DO:T=T+1:LOOPUNTILT=400
40002 GOTO20160
40025 SOUND1,169,45:SOUND1,169,45:SOUND1,169,30:SOUND1,262,15:
SOUND1,345,45
40026 SOUND1,345,30:SOUND1,262,15:SOUND1,345,30:SOUND1,363,15:
SOUND1,453,60
40027 SOUND1,596,45:SOUND1,453,45:SOUND1,345,45:SOUND1,169,45:
SOUND1,453,30
40028 SOUND1,363,15:SOUND1,345,30:SOUND1,262,15:SOUND1,169,60
40040 PRINT"LEVEL ":LE:"COMPLETED"
40050 PRINT"DO YOU WANT TO GO TO NEXT LEVEL OR THE"
40060 INPUT"RELAXATION MODE <LE OR RE>":RS
40070 IFRS="LE"THENGOTO2080:ELSE20360
40080 LE=LE+1
40090 SCNCLR:COLOR1,2:GOTO40

```



The first one in a series of articles which let you into the secrets of professional programming

Have you ever wondered what is actually inside your computer? Silly question, of course you have. It's full of chips, isn't it! You may also know that there is a great big one, probably bigger than most of the rest, called a CPU, or micro processor.

Ever wondered how it all works? Yes? Well, perhaps I can help you.

To begin — you first turn on your computer and see the cursor, the flashing square, line or whatever, and start tapping away in Basic, but you are actually being conned. You are not truly programming the computer at all. All you are doing is telling the computer which bits of its real program repertoire to run, it has this already stored inside in the operating system, ROM, Basic, or whatever else you call it. This is in machine code or assembler — they mean the same thing. The high priests of programming back at Amcomatarinclair Computers PLC installed the operating system into your computer at the moment of its inception. Now-

from? Which companies produced them? How many years of development went into them? What about the negatives?

Hang on! What negatives? The negatives that forced 90 per cent of the world's home micro manufacturers to go to just two companies. Well actually, back then there were no huge companies and no long years of effort, only a handful of research people and lots of Budweiser. But let's take a break from the story for a while to give you a list of the more common computers and their processors:

Amstrad CPCs	Z80
Atari XL/XE	6502
BBC	6502
CI6	6502 (variant)
C64	6502 (variant)
CI28	6502 (variant)
	& Z80 (variant)
Electron	6502
MSX	Z80
Spectrum	Z80
VIC	6502
ZX80/1	Z80

Other computers, like the Atari STs, Commodore Amigas and the QL, have a processor called

16 instructions which allowed it to add or subtract, for instance, and was all you really needed to control a washing machine or a fridge. But after a while Intel saw that the 4004 wasn't really up to the jobs that people were beginning to think up for it so the Intel 8080 was born. With 64k of memory, eight bits to the byte and oodles of instructions it was just the thing to shove in your computerised industrial controller or moon rocket.

About the same time, a hi-fi company turned chip manufacturer came up with a similar processor, the Motorola 6800. This was similar in a lot of ways — eight bits and 64K of memory, but handled things slightly differently. The race was on as to whose would be the standard processor...

PARTING OF THE WAYS

When you want to make something better there are two ways to do it. Take a car, for instance, you can strip it down, put in better brakes and suspension and a better engine and have a sports car, or you can put in every imaginable extra like stereo, TV, electric windows, etc and you then have a luxury car. They are both



sold the idea to Commodore. The computer Commodore put together developed into the PET and, ultimately, the Commodore 64.

Another story concerns the Apple II — which was born in a garage (yes really!) The designer went down to his local 'chip' shop to buy some Z80s to put in it but this chip was so new the shop didn't have any, but it did have some 6502s. So the Apple ended up with a 6502 processor.

FINAL SCORE

In the end neither company won really. Both processors were being used extensively up until a couple of years ago, but most home computers were first

PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMMING.

adays it's usually other computers that write the operating system, would you believe.

To cut a long story short, when you type in PRINT the computer does not think, ah! PRINT, I know what that means, I shall print what follows onto the screen. What it actually thinks is PRINT, that means run that bit of real program down there in the operating system ROM. Or, more likely, what on Earth does 'PRONT' mean, I'll have to syntax error him again.

HOW IT ALL CAME ABOUT

It may surprise you that while there are a lot of computers and only slightly fewer operating systems there are only two different microprocessors for 90 per cent of all the home computers sold. Some readers may know that they are the Z80 and 6502, but where did they come

the 68000 and all IBM type machines have an 8086 processor. These computers make up the other 10 per cent of the market.

As you can see, every one of the big popular computers in the past and all the current big selling ones have one or the other of these two processors. So back to the plot and how these processors came about.

IN THE BEGINNING

The microprocessor is believed to have been invented in the early seventies and was first used to control traffic lights. The forerunner of the present micro processors was a 4-bit processor called the Intel 4004 from the firm of the same name. It could access 256 memory locations in much the same way as a modern(!) 8-bit computer accesses 65536 (64k) memory locations.

The little 4004 processor had

better than the original ordinary car, but are suited to different jobs.

It was these two approaches that the two new chips took but first a group of engineers from Intel left to form Zilog and a group from Motorola left to form MOS Technology. Zilog produced the Z80 chip and MOS Technology produced the 6502 chip.

The Z80 started out as an ordinary 8080 processor, then the engineers added lots of extra instructions, 500 in all, everything that a programmer could want was there, it was the luxury car of the processor world.

Meanwhile the 6502, developed from the 6800, was stripped for action, anything not needed was removed and only the essentials kept. The result was an extremely fast chip.

Both chips nearly died out in the early days but had lucky breaks. The 6502 was having a hard time gaining acceptance until its designer, Chuck Peddle, designed a computer around it and

designed 2-5 years ago.

The successor to the Z80 was the Z8000, but this failed to take off in the home computer world, although it is still used quite extensively in aviation. The successors to the 6502, called the 65000 series, has now developed into the WS16065 and is the processor in the new Apple II GS. In between Motorola devised the 6809 chip, used in the now defunct Dragon, and the 68000, used in the once state of the art Apple Macintosh. The Intel 8086 meanwhile became for a while the standard business processor.

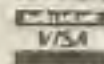
What's happening now is that the latest RISC processors have been incorporated in the latest IBM machines so that they can't work with other machines or non-IBM software so, sadly, it looks like the exciting days of ever more revolutionary new computers are over. Big Blue, in the interests of profits — it's own — is determined to see to that! The chips are really down in the eighties.



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GAMER REVIEW

Title: Bride of Frankenstein
Computer: Amstrad CPC
Supplier: Ariolasoft
Price: £8.99

From being an expensive US software importer, Ariolasoft is maturing into one of the better mid-range software houses.

Ariolasoft's latest game, *Bride of Frankenstein*, is an original maze set in the castle of the evil Dr Frankenstein.

You play the young lady betrothed to the monster. But you have a problem. Before you can marry your man, you have to find the parts necessary to build him!

The search is on then to find all the various bits and bobs: bodily organ; heart (how romantic!); kidneys; lungs etc. that go to make up a nice monster like Frankie.

However, you have to be sure you get good quality parts to construct your beloved as there's some real rubbish around that won't do him any good at all! And, as you may have guessed, getting these components is not as easy. The castle is a 60 room warren of rooms, staircases and secret passages. There is also the tower where Frankie is lying dormant.

Running around these rooms are all manner of spooks, spectres and evil creatures. As you have nothing to defend yourself with you had best avoid them — otherwise the strain on your already frail heart could prove too much. Increasing strain on your heart is shown by a little picture of one on the screen. Instead of a meaningless energy bar,

Ariolasoft latest game makes you feel like a new man!

or an even more meaningless three lives, *Bride of Frankenstein* features a little heart. It throbs away, getting faster and faster as you get more and more terrified by the nasties. They are in the graveyard, in the laboratories and in the crypt!

If your poor overstrained heart starts beating too fast it will burst and you will have encountered the "special cardiac arrest feature" made so much of on the packaging and, of course, you only have one life so...

Of course you could always — if you can find it, take some of the green Elixir of Life to calm you down, or seek one of the sanctuary arches to recover in.

To find your loved one you have to get together various objects and solve all the puzzles. Some doors are locked, for instance, so you have to find the appropriate key — there are seven keys in all, they all fit different doors and there is no way of telling which fits which unless you try them all.

The control and object system is icon controlled. Pictures of what you have collected line up along the bottom of the screen. There is also a directional control for the spade

and the axe — used for grave robbing etc.

The graphics are of very high quality — all the objects and on screen features are large and well coloured using the multi-coloured graphics mode of the Amstrad. The rooms are displayed in semi-3D and you get that glued-to-one-corner-of-the-ceiling feeling as you look down on the action at an angle.

A very impressive game that is well structured and logical, interesting to play and watch and extremely humorous. I hope Ariolasoft continues to produce games like this and doesn't fall into the same trap as many software houses who bottle and end up producing variations on the same boring theme.

MR

SCORELINE

Impact	85%
Originality	65%
Gameplay	Gameplay%
X-Factor	80%
OVERALL	75%

BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN



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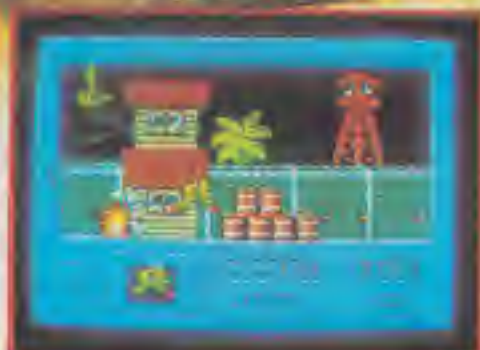
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